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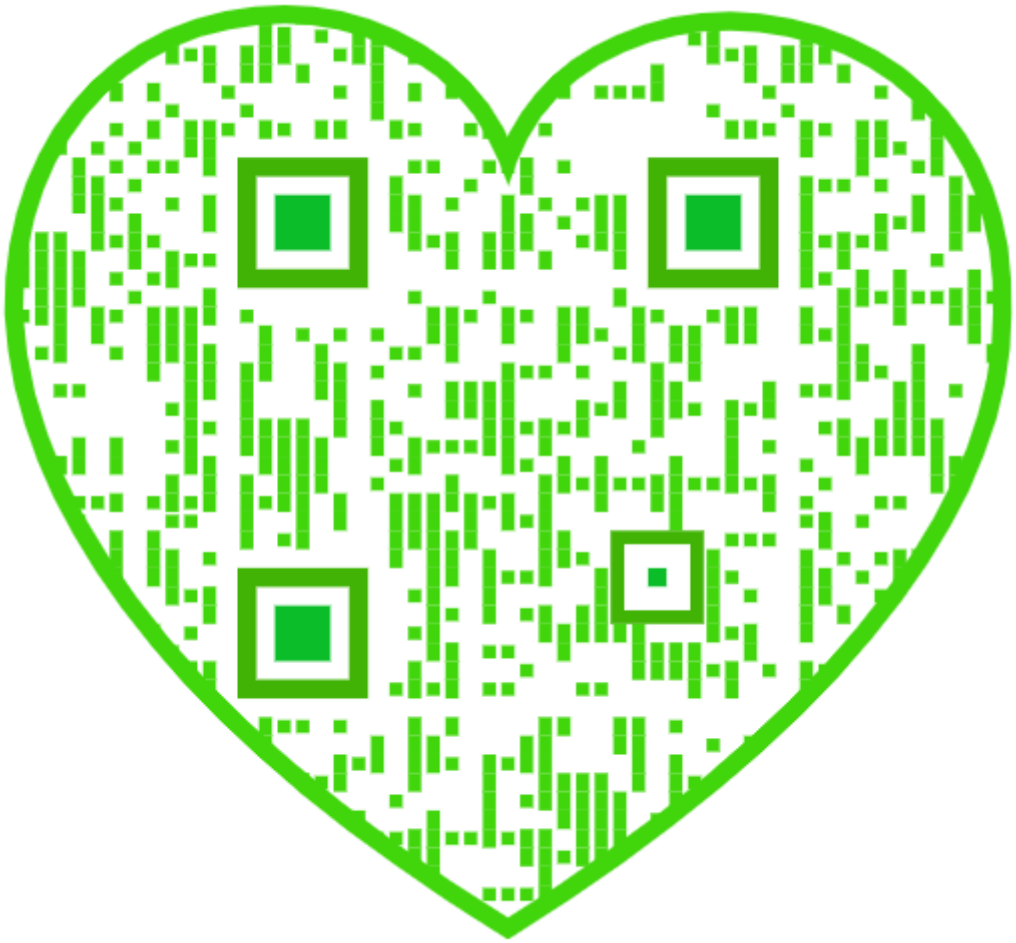

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ENGLISH FURNITURE

OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Volume III

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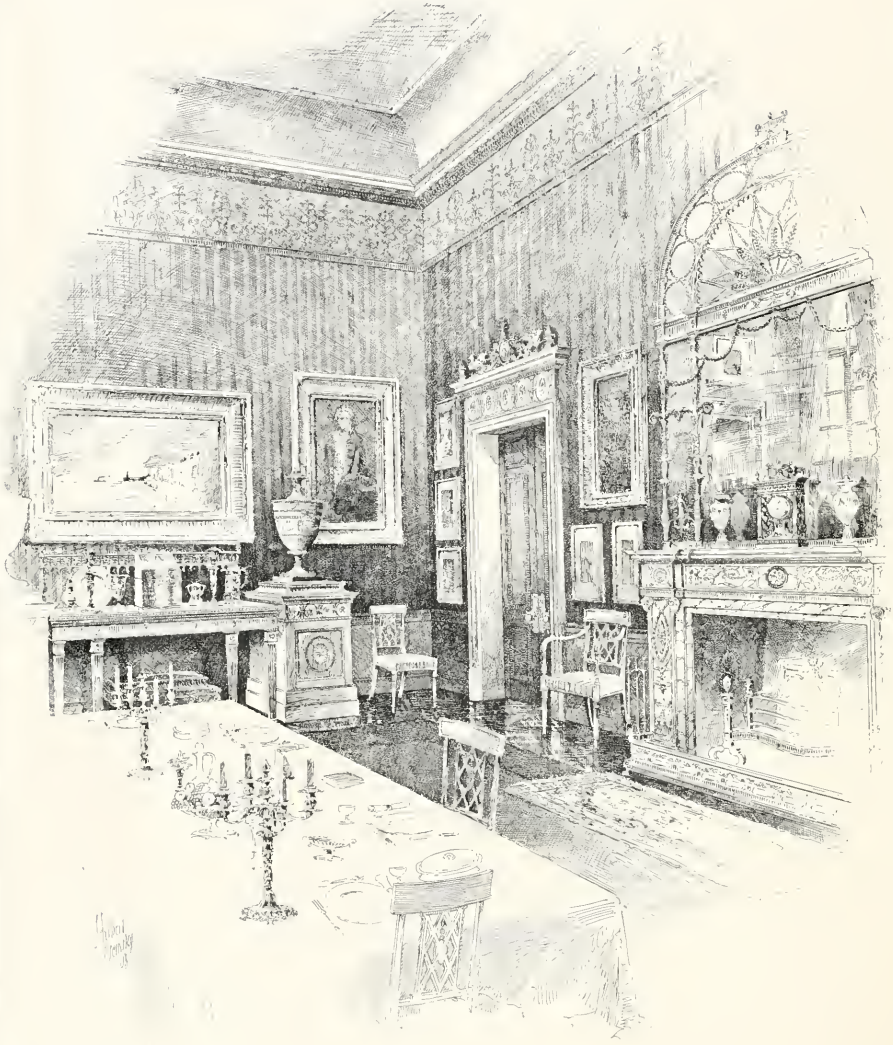

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ENGLISH FURNITURE

OF THE

Eighteenth Century

VOLUME III

BY HERBERT CESCINSKY

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ADAM, JAMES, *Architect, d.* 1794. *See* ROBERT ADAM.

ADAM, ROBERT, *Architect, b.* 1728, *d.* 1792. *Travelled in France* 1754, *Italy* 1755, *visited Rome in* 1756. *Explored ruins of Diocletian's Palace in* 1757. *Published the "Ruins of the Palace of the Emperor Diocletian at Spalatro in Dalmatia," 71 engravings by Bartolozzi, folio,* 1764, £3, 10s. *Architect to the King* 1762. *Member for borough of Kinross* 1768. *Published the "Works in Architecture of Robert and James Adam, Esquires," 125 plates, 3 vols. folio, vols. i. and ii.* 1773–1778, *vol. iii. (posthumous)* 1812. *Died at* 13 *Albemarle Street and buried in South Transept of Westminster Abbey.*

ALDRICH, ARCHER, *Architect, d.* 1736.

ALDRICH, HENRY, D.D., *Architect,* 1647–1710. *Published "Elements of Civil Architecture,"* 1789.

BELL OF LYNN, *Architect,* 1653–1717.

BRETTINGHAM, M., *Architect. Published "Holkham Hall," 1st edition* 1760.

BRUNETTI, G. *Published "Ornaments," 1st edition* 1731, *2nd edition* 1736.

BURLINGTON, LORD, *Architect, d.* 1753.

BURROUGH, SIR J., 1690–1764.

CAMPBELL, C., *d.* 1734. *Published "Vitruvius Britannicus," vol. i.* 1715, *vol. ii.* 1717, *vol. iii.* 1725.

CARTER, J. *Published "Ancient Architecture in England,"* 1795.

CHAMBERS, E. *Published "Translation of Le Clerc's Treatise on Architecture,"* 1724.

CHAMBERS, SIR WM., *Architect. Born at Stockholm,* 1726. *(His knighthood was a Swedish decoration.) Died* 1796. *Published "Designs for Chinese Buildings,"* 1759; *"A Treatise on Civil Architecture,"* 1765; *"Plans, Elevations, Sections and Perspective Views of the Gardens and Buildings at Kew,"* 1763; *"Dissertation on Oriental Gardening,"* 1772.

CHIPPENDALE, THOMAS (I.). *Appears to have been a joiner and picture-frame maker of Worcester, who migrated to London,* 1720–7. *Little or nothing is definitely known concerning him.*

CHIPPENDALE, THOMAS (II.). *Date of birth unknown. Commenced business about* 1735. *Removed to* 60 *St. Martin's Lane,* 1753. *Member of Society of Arts,* 1760. *Published "Gentleman and Cabinet-makers' Director," 1st edition* 1754, *2nd edition* 1759, *3rd edition* 1762. *Died* 1779.

CHIPPENDALE, THOMAS (III.). *Continued business of his father under name of "Haig and Chippendale" or "Chippendale and Haig." Became bankrupt in* 1805. *Published "Ornaments,"* 1779.

CIPRIANI, GIOVANNI BATTISTA, *Artist and Decorator, b. about* 1727, *d.* 1785. *Published "Ornaments,"* 1786.

CLARKE, DR., *Architect, d.* 1736.

COLUMBANI, PLACIDO, *Artist and Designer. Published "Ornaments,"* 1775; *"Capitals, &c.,"* 1776.

COPELAND, H., *Designer. Published "New Book of Ornaments,"* 1746. *See* LOCK & COPELAND.

CRUNDEN, J., *Designer. Published "Ornamental Architecture,"* 1770; *"Cabinet-makers' Darling,"* 1765.

DARLY, M., *Caricaturist and Designer. Published "Chinese Designs" (Edwards and Darly),* 1754; *"60 Vases,"* 1767; *"Ornamental Architecture,"* 1770. *Engraved many of the plates in Chippendale's "Director."*

DANCE THE ELDER, *Architect,* 1698–1768.

DANCE THE YOUNGER, *Architect,* 1741–1825.

EDWARDS & DARLY. *Published "Chinese Designs,"* 1754. *See* MATTHIAS DARLY.

FISCHER, J. B., *Architect. Published "Plan of Civil and Historical Architecture,"* 1730.

FLITCROFT, —, *Architect,* 1697–1769.

GIBBS, JAMES, *Architect, b.* 1674, *d.* 1754. *Published "Rules for Drawing the Five Orders,"* 1732; *"Shields and Tablets,"* 1731; *"Architecture," 1st edition* 1728, *2nd edition* 1739; *"Radcliffe Library at Oxford,"* 1747.

GILLOWS OF LONDON AND LANCASTER, *Cabinet-makers,* 1695 *to present day.*

GWYNNE, J. *Published "Essay on Harmony in Building,"* 1734.

HALFPENNY, W., *Architect and Designer. Published "Practical Architecture," 1st edition* 1724, *2nd edition* 1736; *"Art of Sound Building,"* 1725; *"Magnum in Parvo, or the Marrow of Architecture,"* 1728; *"Complete System of Architecture,"* 1749; *"New Designs for Chinese Temples,"* 1750; *"Useful Architecture,"* 1755.

HALFPENNY, W. & J. *Published "Modern Builder's Assistant,"* 1757.

HAWKSMOOR, NICHOLAS, *Architect,* 1661–1736. *Published "Account of London Bridge,"* 1736.

"HEPPLEWHITE, A., & Co." *Published "Cabinet-makers' and Upholsterers' Guide," 1st edition* 1788, *2nd edition* 1789, *3rd edition* 1794.

HEPPLEWHITE, GEORGE, *Cabinet-maker. Very little is known concerning him. Had a workshop in Redcross Street, E.C. Died* 1785–6. *Business continued by his widow, Alice, as "A. Hepplewhite & Co."*

HOPPUS, E. *Published "Palladio's Architecture,"* 1735; *"Gentlemen's and Builder's Repository,"* 1737.

INCE & MAYHEW, *Cabinet-makers. Published "A System of Household Furniture," about* 1763.

JAMES, JOHN, *Architect, d.* 1746.

JOHNSON, THOMAS, *Cabinet-maker. Published "Designs for Picture Frames,"* 1758; *"New Designs,"* 1761.

JONES, W. *Published "Gentleman and Builder's Companion,"* 1739.

K. C. *"Art's Masterpiece, or a Companion for the ingenious of either sex,"* 1697 *(Japanning).*

KENT, WILLIAM, *Architect,* 1684–1748. *Published "Designs of Inigo Jones,"* 1727.

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LANGLEY, BATTY. *Designer. Published "Practical Geometry," 1726; "New Principles of Gardening," 1728; "Sure Guide to Builders," 1729; "Young Builder's Rudiments," 1734; "Ancient Masonry," 1736; "Designs for a Bridge at Westminster," 1736; "Builders' Compleat Assistant," 1738; "Treasury of Designs," 1740; "Builder's Bench-mate," 1746; "Builders' Director," 1767.*

LANGLEY, BATTY & THOMAS. *Published "Ancient Architecture," 1742; "Builder's Treasury of Designs," 1745; "Gothic Architecture Improved," 1747.*

LEONI, G., *Architect, d. 1746. Published "Architecture of Palladio," 1st edition 1715, 2nd edition 1721, 3rd edition 1742; "Architecture of Alberti," 1st edition 1726, 2nd edition 1755.*

LEWES, J. *Published "Designs in Architecture," 1780.*

LOCK & COPELAND. *Published "Ornaments," 1st edition 1752, 2nd edition 1768.*

LOCK, MATTHIAS, *Designer. Published "Six Tables," 1746; "Book of Tables, &c.," 1768; "Six Sconces," 1768; "Pier Frames, &c.," 1769; "New Book of Foliage," 1769.*

MANWARING, ROBERT, *Cabinet-maker. Published "Carpenters' Compleat Guide," 1765; "Cabinet and Chair Makers' Best Friend," 1765; "Chair-makers' Guide," 1766.*

MILTON, COLUMBANI, CRUNDEN & OVERTON. *Published "Chimneypiece-makers' Assistant," 1766.*

MORRIS, R., *Architect, d. 1770. Published "Defence of Ancient Architecture," 1728; "Architecture Improved," 1755.*

NEWTON, W. *Published "Civil Architecture of Vitruvius," 1791.*

NICHOLS, J. *Published "Antiquities of Lambeth Palace," 1782.*

NICHOLSON, P. *Published "Principles of Architecture," 1795–8.*

NOLLEKENS, JOSEPH, R.A., *Sculptor, b. 1737, d. 1823. There is some evidence in the Adam drawings in the Soane Museum, that he worked for Robert Adam.*

OAKLEY, E. *Published the "Magazine of Architecture," &c., 1731.*

OVERTON, T. C. *Published "Designs for Temples," 1766.*

PAINE, JAMES, *Architect, d. 1716. Published "Plans of Noblemen's and Gentlemen's Houses," 1767–70, 2nd edition 1783.*

PAINE, W. *Published "Builders' Companion," 1st edition 1761, 2nd edition 1765, 3rd edition 1769; "Practical Builder," 1774, 2nd edition 1793; "Carpenters' Repository," 1778.*

PAINE, W. & J. *Published "British Palladio," 1786.*

PASTORINI, B., *Designer. Published "Designs for Girandoles," 1775.*

PERGOLESI, MICHEL ANGELO, *Decorator. Published "Designs," 1777.*

RICHARDS, G. *Published "Palladio's First Book of Architecture," 1721.*

RICHARDSON, G., *Designer. Published "Five Orders of Architecture," 1787; "New Designs in Architecture," 1792; "Designs for Country Seats and Villas," 1795; "Ceilings," 1776, 2nd edition 1793; "Chimney Pieces," 1781; "Designs for Tripods, &c.," 1793.*

RIPLEY, T., *Architect, d. 1758. Was part architect of Houghton Hall.*

SALMON, W. *Published "Polygraphica, or the Arts of Drawing," 4th edition 1701; "Palladio Londoniensis," 1743.*

SHEARER, HEPPLEWHITE & OTHERS, *Cabinet-makers. Published "London Book of Prices," 2nd edition 1793.*

SHEARER, T., *Cabinetmaker. Published "Cabinet-makers' London Book of Prices," 1788; "Designs for Household Furniture," 1788.*

SHERATON, THOMAS, *Cabinet-maker and Designer. Born at Stockton-on-Tees about 1750. Died in London 1806. Published "Cabinet-makers' and Upholsterers' Drawing Book," 1st edition 1791, 2nd edition (2 vols.) 1793, 3rd edition 1802; "Cabinet Dictionary," 1803; "Cabinet-maker, Upholsterer and General Artists' Encyclopædia" (projected in 125 folio numbers, but never completed), 1st part only, 1804.*

SOANE, SIR JOHN, *Architect. Donor of the Soane Museum in Lincoln Inn Fields to the Nation. Published "Designs in Architecture," 1778; "Plans and Elevations of Buildings," 1788; "Sketches in Architecture," 1793.*

STALKER & PARKER. *Published "A Treatise on Japanning, &c.," 1688.*

SWAN, ABRAHAM, *Architect. Published "Staircases," 1st edition 1745, 2nd edition 1750; "Designs in Architecture," 1757; "British Architect," 1758; "Designs in Carpentry," 1759.*

TALLMAN, J., *Architect, d. 1710.*

TATHAN, E. H. *Published "Examples of Ancient Architecture," 1794.*

TAYLOR, SIR ROBERT, *Architect, 1714–1778.*

VANBRUGH, SIR JOHN, *Architect, 1666–1716.*

WALLIS, N., *Designer. Published "Book of Ornaments," 1771; "Compleat Joyner," 1772.*

WARE, ISAAC, *Architect, d. 1766. Published "Rookby Hall, Yorks," 1735; "Designs for the Mansion House," 1737; "Palladio's Architecture," 1738; "Designs of Inigo Jones," 1743; "Complete Body of Architecture," 1756; "Kent and Ripley's Designs for Houghton Hall," 1760.*

WOOD, J. *Published "Origin of Building," 1741.*

WOOD OF BATH, *Architect, 1754–1782.*

WOOD, R. *Published "Ruins of Palmyra," 1753.*

WOOLFE & GANDON. *Published "Vitruvius Britannicus," vol. v. 1771.*

WREN, SIR CHRISTOPHER, *1632–1723.*

WRIGHT, W. *Published "Grotesque Architecture," 1768.*

WYNNE, CAPT. WILLIAM, *Architect, d. 1705.*

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Chapter I.

Robert and James Adam.

THE position occupied by the brothers Robert and James Adam is an unique one in the history of English eighteenth-century furniture. They differed from the joiner-architects such as Batty Langley and Halfpenny, in being architects purely and simply. In one respect, however, their influence was infinitely more far-reaching, as regards the furniture of their time, than the united efforts of Wren, Kent, Ware, Gibbs or Hawksmoor. These architects had confined their attention almost entirely to buildings and interior decoration; such furniture as William Kent, for instance, designed, can be so styled only by straining courtesy to the breaking point. It may be said with strict justice that these architects, when they turned their attention to furniture, discovered an utter lack of knowledge of the principles of construction in wood, and the possibilities and limitations of such embellishments as carving, inlay or upholstery. In the matter of ruling the furnishing fashions of their time they were far more favourably circumstanced than the brothers Adam. The trade of the joiner had not even commenced to attain the importance which it afterwards assumed in the hands of men such as Chippendale, Ince, Hepplewhite and Sheraton. The architect was not only the most important, he was the only factor to be reckoned with in the building and the furnishing of the mansions which were erected at this date. When the brothers Adam came into prominence, however, Chippendale, and probably Hepplewhite, were already independently established, and it bears striking testimony to the character of Robert Adam that he was enabled to superimpose his style on one as well founded as that of Chippendale.

Robert Adam, the leading spirit of the combination, was born in Kirkcaldy in 1728. He was one of four brothers, John, Robert, James and William, and the son of the master mason of Edinburgh, William Adam, who was a fairly distinguished architect in the Lowlands. John Adam succeeded to the father's business on the death of the latter in 1748, and William probably assisted him in the office.*

Roman architecture had, from the first, an overpowering fascination for Robert Adam, and in after life became the dominating factor in the evolution of the style

* The four brothers were afterwards associated in business in London. See the chapter on the Adelphi Lottery later on.

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associated with his name. The usual idea, that he borrowed his inspiration from French sources, is entirely erroneous; the only styles which at all approach his in dignity, the Empire and Directoire, are of later date. The superficial resemblance which might be thought to exist between the style of Robert Adam and the Louis Seize disappears on examination. The latter is essentially suitable for small rooms; it becomes utterly puerile when applied to lofty apartments of large size. With the work of Adam, although the detail is delicate and sometimes even finicking, the large scale and dignity of his massing and the value he gives to empty spaces, redeem it from any such charge.

Fired with this admiration for the classicalism of Rome, Robert Adam, in 1754, started on his grand tour, and for three years he travelled incessantly and sketched assiduously, in France in the latter part of 1754, Italy in 1755, and lastly Rome itself in the following year. In 1757 he decided to thoroughly explore the ruins of the palace of the Emperor Diocletian at Spalatro in Venetian Dalmatia, and in July he started from Venice in company with Charles Louis Clérisseau. The result of five weeks of diligent sketching and measuring was incorporated in the folio volume entitled the *Ruins of the Palace of the Emperor Diocletian at Spalatro in Dalmatia,* which was published in 1764, price £3, 10s.* The engravings were executed by Bartolozzi from the sketches of Adam and Clérisseau. Some difficulty appears to have been experienced with the Governor of Dalmatia, and at the outset Adam and his companions ran some risk of being arrested as spies had not influence from another quarter intervened.†

In 1758, Robert Adam was back again in England, and firmly established, as between this year and 1762 date the designs for the Admiralty screen and most of the work done at Sion House for the Duke of Northumberland. Practically the whole of the original sketches of both Robert and James Adam have been preserved, and may be seen at the Soane Museum, by the courtesy of the curator. From these we can gather that James Adam probably accompanied his brother on his Italian tour, and he was certainly in Venice in 1760, and in Rome two years later, together with Clérisseau and the painter Antonio Zucchi, the latter of whom was responsible for some of the decorative work at Lord St. Oswald's Yorkshire home, Nostell Priory, some three years later.

* It is worthy of note that as early as 1764, in the sub-title of this work, Robert Adam subscribes himself "F.R.S., F.S.A., Architect to the King and to the Queen." The preface is in the usual form, a classical address to the King. There are printed the names of 499 English and 26 foreign (chiefly Italian) subscribers, 525 in all, taking 571 "setts" (from which we can infer that the work was first issued in part form). There are many illustrious names in the list, from which can be gathered some idea of Robert Adam's connection with the nobility at this early date in his career. Thus the Earl of Shelburne takes five "setts"; the Duke of Argyll, two; the Right Honourable John, Earl of Bute, ten (the last two, fellow-countrymen of Adam); and John Balfour, bookseller (presumably another Scot), ten "setts" (? as a speculation). Zucchi, afterwards husband to the unfortunate Angelica Kauffmann, engraved many of the plates in the book.

† *Vide* Robert Adam's own account in the book of the circumstances attending the explorations and measurements.

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In 1762, Robert Adam was appointed architect to the King, a favour due to the patronage of Lord Bute, and which subjected the brothers to some scurrilous abuse from the pamphleteers of the time, who at this date represented what is now known as the "power of the press." In 1768 he was elected to Parliament for the borough of Kinross. Of the more notable works of the brothers may be mentioned the Adelphi, Portland Place, Spring Gardens, some of the streets off Bond Street, the older part of Gower Street, Bryanston Square and one side of Portman Square. Fitzroy Square, and many of the houses on the eastern and southern sides of the Regent's Park, and one or two in Soho Square, are further examples. Of the more noted mansions may be mentioned Osterley Park at Isleworth, a seat of Lord Jersey; Shelburne (now Lansdowne) House; Kenwood, the Hampstead mansion of Lord Mansfield; Sion House; Gawthorp, afterwards Harewood House; Montagu House; and Lord Scarsdale's magnificent mansion, Kedleston. The interior work, decoration and furniture, designed by the brothers Adam, and executed with the assistance of Pergolesi, Cipriani, Angelica Kauffmann, Zucchi, Placido Columbani and Chippendale, can be seen at Nostell Priory, Wakefield; Harewood House, between Leeds and Harrogate; Osterley Park, the Isleworth seat of the Earl of Jersey; and at Kenwood in Hampstead Lane.

In 1773, the first folio part of the *Works in Architecture of Robert and James Adam, Esquires,* was published, the work appearing at intervals until 1778. A posthumous volume was published in 1812. The plates, 125 in number, were engraved on copper, carefully prepared from drawings now preserved in the Soane Museum, and comprised exteriors of buildings and designs for decoration and furniture.

Robert Adam died in 1792 at 13 Albemarle Street, and was buried in the south transept of Westminster Abbey. James followed his brother two years later, dying in October 1794, and like him, he remained a bachelor to the last. William Adam, the fourth brother, lived until 1822.

The name of the brothers is closely associated with the present-day compo-work, of which they were the pioneers in England. This composition was a mixture of whiting, resin and size, which was amalgamated when hot and allowed to cool to the consistency of dough. It was then pressed into moulds (usually carved in boxwood, but sometimes cast in a plastic mixture of earthenware), which were greased beforehand, and the base of the ornament having been cut level with a knife, the mould was removed and the composition affixed either with glue or with small panel pins. As a substitute for carving, this composition had the advantage of cheapness, and when strengthened with wire behind, the pendant swags, so characteristic of the work of the brothers, were made possible, and of sufficient toughness to withstand even rough usage. The dis-

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advantage of this composition-work was in its liability to warp, contract or crack under severe changes of temperature. It could never be used, with safety, for exterior work. The method of the manufacture of this composition appears to have been well kept during the lifetime of Robert Adam, but it became an open secret shortly after. Perhaps the most important factor which kept the monopoly intact was the large initial cost of the boxwood moulds.*

The work of the brothers Adam has now to be considered, but here the source of manufacture is not known in the majority of instances. Thomas Chippendale certainly worked under Robert Adam's direction at Harewood and Nostell Priory. George Hepplewhite was also probably employed by him, but to the larger number of the Adam pieces still extant it is not possible to ascribe an exact origin. Both Chippendale and Hepplewhite may have made more than the preserved records appear to indicate, and others, such as Wallis, Carter, John Crunden and George Richardson, appear to have assimilated the style of Adam, but whether under his immediate guidance, or from independent study of Roman sources, it is not possible to say. It must be confessed, that with the exception of those who actually published books of design, we know little or nothing of the greater number of the small cabinet-makers of this period, many of whom might easily have been employed by Robert or James Adam. In regard to the furniture, the style of the brothers was also so freely copied by others, who may have sought inspiration from the same Roman and Italian sources, that it is not always possible to ascribe an author to either the design or the workmanship of many of the pieces illustrated in the following pages. We have, therefore, to fall back on the plan adopted in the case of the work of Thomas Chippendale, and to consider the examples as being in the "Adam Style," in the same way as the pieces in the previous volume were referred to as specimens of the various manners of Chippendale.

* See account of the Liardet stucco, in the later chapter on the Adelphi Lottery. This stucco and the composition referred to above are frequently confused. In character as well as in purpose they are quite distinct.

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Chapter II.

The Work of Robert and James Adam.

Introductory Remarks.

IN considering the furniture creations of the brothers Adam, we have to adopt a totally different method than with the work of any of the eighteenth century craftsmen. A fashionable cabinet-maker such as Chippendale, or a poor, neglected teacher of drawing like Sheraton, had each been trained in the workshop, and possessed the practical artisan's experience. Whether or no they made all or none of the furniture which they designed is immaterial ; they were capable of doing so had occasion demanded, and their creations were finished when they left their hand, and could be executed with little or no modification by any experienced workman. The reference here, in the case of Chippendale, is to his actual designs, those which were made specifically for the workshop as distinct from many of the *Director* patterns, which were frankly evolved to catch the eye of a wealthy public eager for any new absurdity, or to puzzle his fellow-craftsmen. The main point is, that both Chippendale and Sheraton could be rational and workmanlike in their drawings, when they chose. With the drawings of the brothers Adam, however, the case is otherwise. A comparison of the original sketches, now in the Soane Museum, with the actual articles as made, will show how deeply indebted were both Robert and James Adam to the rationalising influence of the cabinet-maker. Another noticeable point is that both the brothers showed a reckless disregard for the material in which their fancies were to be materialised. A column of an exterior portico or the leg of a table were frequently of identical design. It is obvious that one of the two *must* have been incongruous. Again, Robert Adam designed at least one carpet which exactly matched a ceiling of the same room, and the colourings of both, in the sketches, are identical. We find no exuberance of imagination leading the designer beyond the rational field of his material, but we do find the man of stone and plaster adapting the same motives to wood and fabrics. The introduction of composition ornament was a logical necessity with much of the furniture designed by Robert Adam. The pendant swags, unattached excepting at their extremities, which are so characteristic of the Adams' work, are logical impossibilities in wood, although in the earlier examples they were attempted in this material, with disastrous results. This proves, however, that Robert Adam did not definitely evolve his furniture style with composition ornament

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specifically in his mind, but that this imitation of carving saved many of his designs from utter failure. No one with a true artistic temperament but must revolt from the use of much of this pressed-out composition ornament masquerading as carving, necessarily demanding to be either painted or gilded, as it could not stand forth in all its verity without the sham being exposed, and yet showing its utter falseness in the method in which it is used, such as swags hanging across panels of silvered glass, or depending from the friezes of tables, and the like. Both Robert and James Adam appear to have been obsessed, in much of their work, with a craze for excessive delicacy, without regard to the cardinal principle of all proportion in architecture and in furniture, the sufficient appearance, as well as the reality, of strength to serve the necessary purpose. To carry this to a logical finality, one material should not masquerade as another, especially if the latter be the weaker of the two. Thus a concert grand piano could be adequately supported on steel legs two inches thick, and if the nature of the material were immediately evident, the result need not necessarily be incongruous. If, however, these legs be painted and grained to imitate wood, an uncomfortable appearance of inadequate strength is at once apparent and the proportions of the piano appear to be faulty. It must be obvious that if two tables are made from the one design, alike in every detail, but the one in wood and the other in metal, one of the two must be wrong. Either the wooden table will appear to be too delicate or the metal one too heavy.

An examination, however, of many of the designs of the brothers Adam, either of those in the Soane Museum, or in the published *Works in Architecture*, will show that the nature of the material to be used is not indicated by the nature of the drawing itself. The decoration of some of the tables and mirror frames suggest wood, the proportions metal or some material equally as strong.

In considering, therefore, the work of the brothers, it will be as well to divide the field to be surveyed into two parts. In the one, the Adam Style as expounded in drawing or engraving, and in the other the furniture actually made, will have to be separately reviewed. In many instances the two will not necessarily differ to any great extent, as many of the engraved designs, for example, in the folio volumes published by the brothers were taken from pieces after they were made, and represent therefore the original Adams' ideas as modified in the process of manufacture. In many of the Soane Museum designs, however, this difference of proportion between the piece as conceived and as actually made, will be noticed by any one with a designer's eye for proportion.

In considering the Adam style the first noticeable point is either the paucity of

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imagination, or the rigid fidelity to the one style—call it what you will—as compared with the work of Chippendale. The versatility of the latter, as we have seen in the second volume of this work, obliged us to differentiate very carefully between the style and the actual work of Chippendale, but in the case of the brothers Adam we are under no such obligations. Although Robert Adam was frequently imitated by the craftsmen and designers of his time, such as Crunden, Carter and Richardson, he never followed others when his style was once fully developed. When, therefore, we refer to the work of the brothers Adam, their style is also indicated in an equal degree without exception. It is, therefore, unnecessary to adduce a large number of illustrations, as in the case of the work of Thomas Chippendale. The latter passed through many phases in his career, and his designs exhibit a considerable degree of evolution. With the work of the brothers Adam no such development ever takes place. Their style once fixed, every new design simply revolves round the original nucleus of ideas, being merely repetitions with variations, as it were. Perhaps this is the penalty which genius pays to fashion; certainly the brothers moved in good society, and as equals with the highest in their circle. Robert Adam was a person of far too much dignity to play Johnson to a Chesterfield, and his burial in Westminster Abbey is sufficient testimony to the high esteem in which he was held, and shows that he met and served his noble clients on a footing of equality, in houses where Chippendale, even in the zenith of his fame, was merely a tradesman in the estimation of his patrons.

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Chapter III.

The Adam Style.

IT is curious to notice, on a careful examination of the drawings of Robert and James Adam in the Soane Museum, how the influence which the former especially exercised on the furniture-makers of his time is reciprocated by them. The Adam style is not merely a matter of ornament, although some half-dozen of conventional design-forms are repeated over and over again; it is in both the general scheme and the purpose of each piece of furniture which Robert Adam designed that the principles of his style are involved. We have seen, in the case of Chippendale, that general form played a very unimportant part in his designs. Stripped of his characteristic Gothic, fretted, or Chinese details, many of the pieces which he illustrated could be referred to any style, or probably to none in particular. The case is quite otherwise with the really characteristic work of Robert Adam. He probably began with reproducing an ancient Roman palace in an English park, and then found that any piece of furniture of the type common at his day disturbed the harmony of his severe classicalism. Thomas Hope experienced the same difficulty some forty ye later with his "English Empire," and the style of furniture which he evolved to correspond with his interiors was a sheer barbarism.

The cabinet-makers of Robert Adam's day had not the same scruples as the architect. They took his details of the swag, the pendant husks, the honeysuckle, and the other Roman and Grecian forms, and recklessly applied them to the furniture then in common use. The result is a continual battle between the man of stone and marble and the men of wood; the result was—composition. Adam was by no means victorious; he capitulated on numberless points, and this influence of the workers in wood is seen, in very marked fashion, in his later work. Adam would have preferred to furnish with the Roman trestle, the built-in side table, the architectural bookcase, and the like, but his patrons evidently demanded comfort, and he was obliged to conform. Even to the last he was never quite successful with chairs. The principles of his style, essentially one of stone, marble, stucco, and compo, translated into wood, were much more successfully handled by men such as Hepplewhite, than by the author of the style himself. Adam furniture only really begins when his personality becomes submerged and that of the Hepplewhite school is superimposed.

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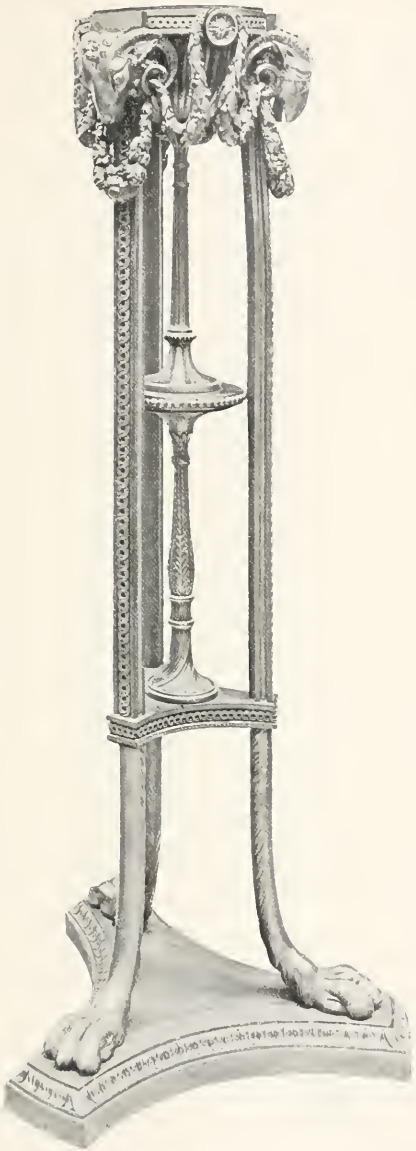

Fig. 1.
GILT PEDESTAL. (One of a pair.)
5 ft. ½ in. high.

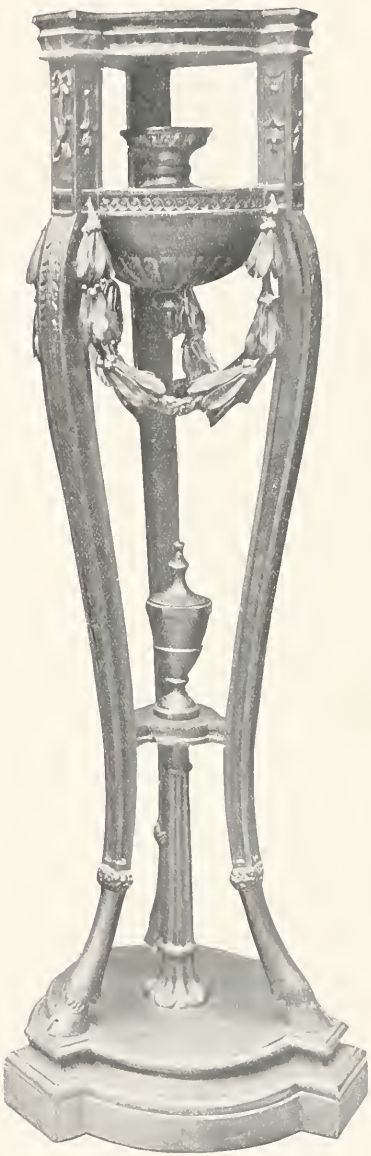

Fig. 2.
GILT PEDESTAL. (One of a pair.)
5 ft. 2 ins. high.

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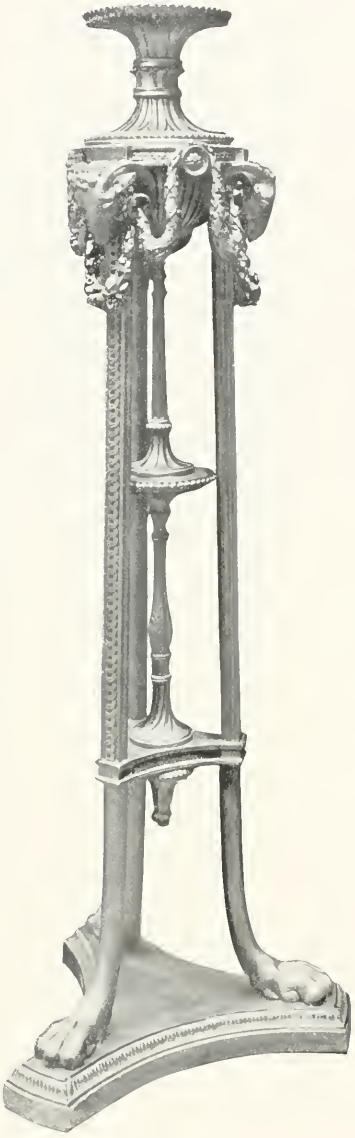

Fig. 3.

GILT PEDESTAL. (One of a pair.)

5 ft. 1 in. high.

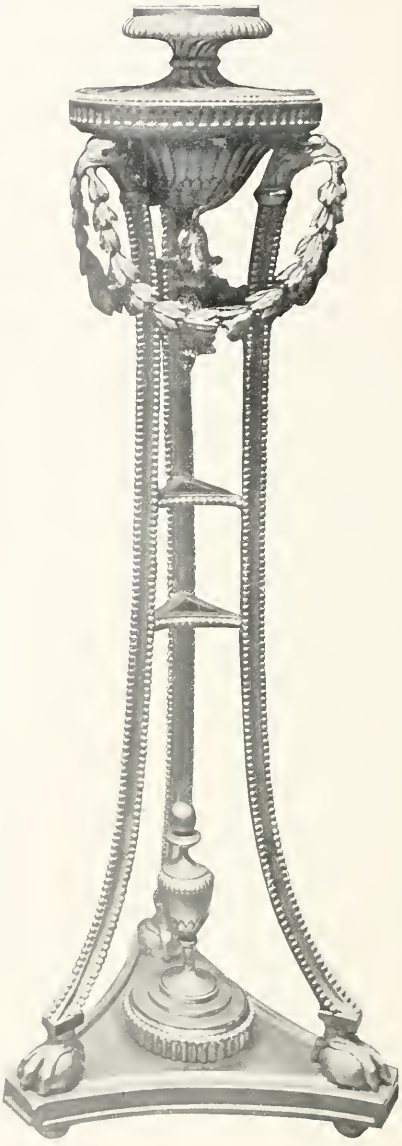

Fig. 4.

GILT PEDESTAL. (One of a pair.)

5 ft. 1½ ins. high.

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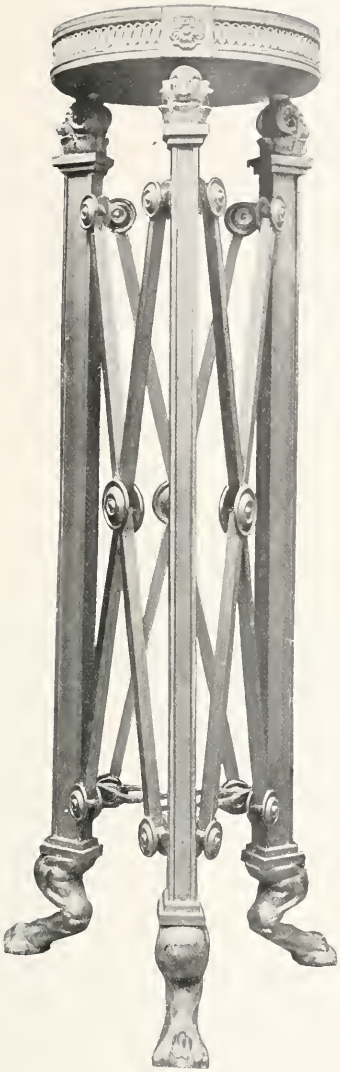

Fig. 5.

GILT PEDESTAL. (One of a pair.)

3 ft 10 ins. high × 1 ft. 1 in. diameter of top.

Fig. 6.

MAHOGANY VASE STAND.

In the possession of Robert Christie, Esq.

4 ft. $\frac{3}{4}$ ins. high × 8 ins. diameter of top.

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There is much, however, in the early work of Robert Adam to be commended, but it was essentially a style demanding metal, stone, or marble as the materials to be employed. This is probably the reason why a good deal of the really successful Adam furniture is gilded or painted in white or cream, where in the first the effect of metal, and in the second that of stone, is obtained.

Fig. 1 is one of a pair of pedestals, of carved wood, thickly overlaid with size preparation and gilded. These pedestals were used for the support of candelabrum, lamps, vases, or statuettes, and were favourite pieces with Robert Adam, as the Roman simplicity of purpose could be allied to the detail of his time, without very incongruous results. In this pedestal the top is circular, edged with a narrow guilloche and divided by three oblong tablets, below which are rams' heads with laurelled swags depending from the horns and carried over three leaf-carved pateræ. The same running guilloche is carried down the legs to the small triangular shelf bracketed between, below which the legs become circular in section, finishing on the plinth with carved paw feet. Additional rigidity is obtained by the central turned columns, and to insure adequate stability the base is made almost disproportionately large.

Fig. 2 is not so successful as a design. The top is also circular, broken out over

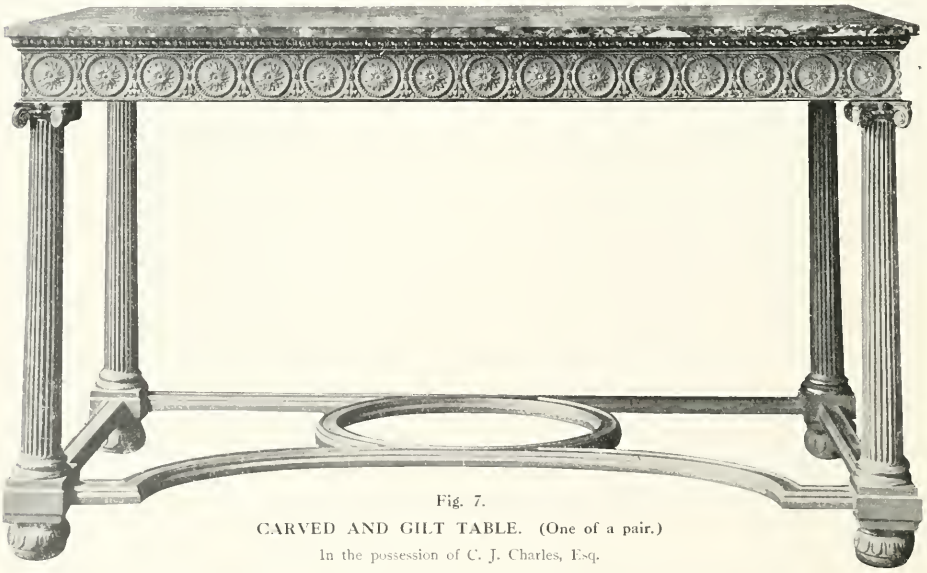

Fig. 7.

CARVED AND GILT TABLE. (One of a pair.)

In the possession of C. J. Charles, Esq.

5 ft. 6 ins. long × 2 ft. 6½ ins. deep × 3 ft. 2½ ins. high.

Date about 1765.

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the tripod. The legs are shaped with a long ogee curve, and finish with rams' feet on a base of the same plan as the top. Loading of the plinth is necessary to counterbalance the piece, which would otherwise be top-heavy. The shape and detail of the turned vase immediately below the top is characteristic of the Adam style.

Figs. 3 and 4 are further examples of these tripod stands, the first matching Fig. 1 exactly, excepting for the turned addition to the top. Fig. 4 is rather unfortunate in the clumsy finish of the claw and ball feet and their attachment to the legs. The central vase of the base is also unnecessary from the point of design.

Fig. 5 has evidently been designed in imitation of the Roman tripod brazier. The circular top is placed on horned satyrs' heads, below which are three straight legs reinforced by a lattice strengthened on the intersection with turned reels, and finishing in conventional renderings of the hinder leg of a goat. A tripod of this type would almost demand gilding as a finish, as the design is obviously more suitable for execution in metal than in wood.

Fig. 6 is a rational design schemed for execution in wood. The top is circular, cupped to hold a vase, and "pearl" carved on the edge. This rests on a triangular top with serpentine-shaped sides and canted corners, the latter having carved oval pateræ applied. The supports are tapered, scrolled on top, and moulded on the fronts with a double ogee and central bead. Below the triangular top is a turned "basin," from

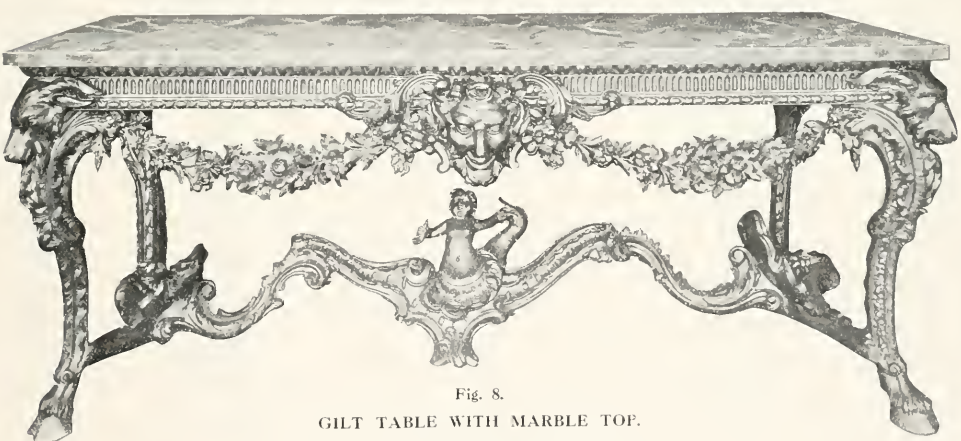

Fig. 8.

GILT TABLE WITH MARBLE TOP.

In the possession of C. J. Charles, Esq.

6 ft. 7 ins. long × 2 ft. 7½ ins. deep × 2 ft. 9½ ins. high.

Date about 1765.

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which depend a series of graduated husks. The legs turn outwards on a heavy moulded base, with carved pateræ on top, and are tied with a small moulded shelf 10½ inches above the base. The whole design is exceedingly graceful and eminently suited to the material.

Robert Adam seems to have been invariably successful in his designs for tables, and he was freely copied by others. He appears to have troubled himself very little with regard to considerations of use, beyond having regard to the proper functions of a table. Drawers are a rarity, if not an impossibility, in nearly all his designs. The older Kent convention of the marble table still persisted in 1760-70, although the taste had changed from the cumbrous to almost an excess of delicacy. Marble tops in conjunction with gilded underframing were the general rule, however, about 1760, exceptions being made in favour of paint and parcel-gilding. The execrable composition so extensively used at this date rendered paint or gold a logical necessity to hide the fraud, and when carving was employed, in the case of a wealthy patron, this was also finished in like manner.

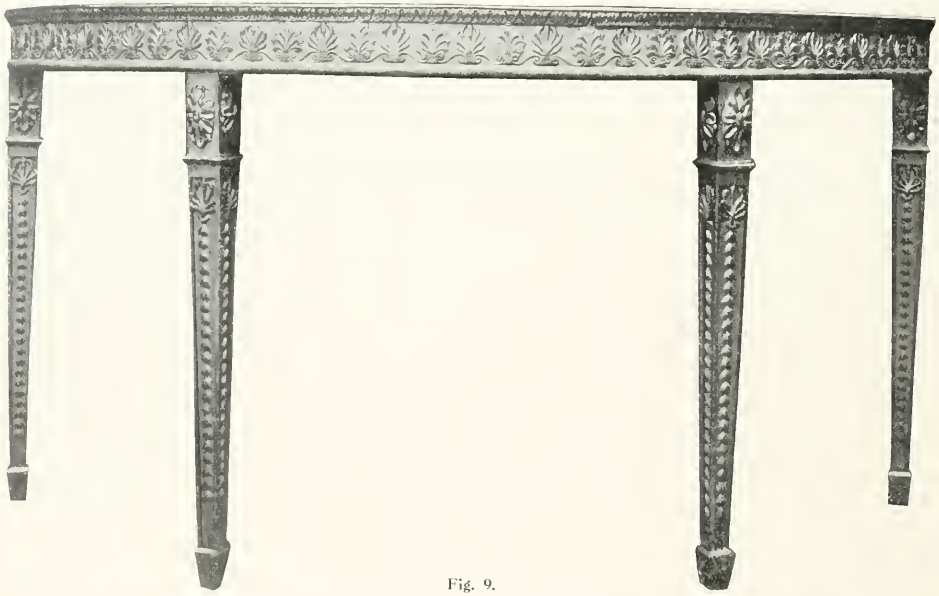

Fig. 9.

GILT SIDE TABLE WITH PAINTED TOP.

4 ft. 8½ ins. long × 1 ft. 11 ins. deep × 2 ft. 5½ ins. high.

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Fig. 7 is a characteristic table of the architectural type, the entire design being carefully studied, in detail and general proportions, with distinctly notable results. The top, of verde antique marble, is supported on a small egg-and-tongue-carved ovolo, surmounting a pateræ-carved frieze. The whole is supported on four fluted columns with decorated Ionic capitals. The "bun" feet are carved, and the shaped stretcher rails are moulded on the fronts and sides. French influence is distinctly noticeable in the design of this table, in spite of the evident striving after the classical ideal.

Fig. 8 is a remarkable table, and probably from the hand of Robert Adam himself, in spite of the unusual flamboyant character. The curved leg, with the goat's head and foot, and the shaped under-rail with the central figure, suggests Chippendale rather than Adam, and, considering the business connection of the two at Nostell, Harewood, and elsewhere, this is by no means improbable. The marble tops of tables of this kind,

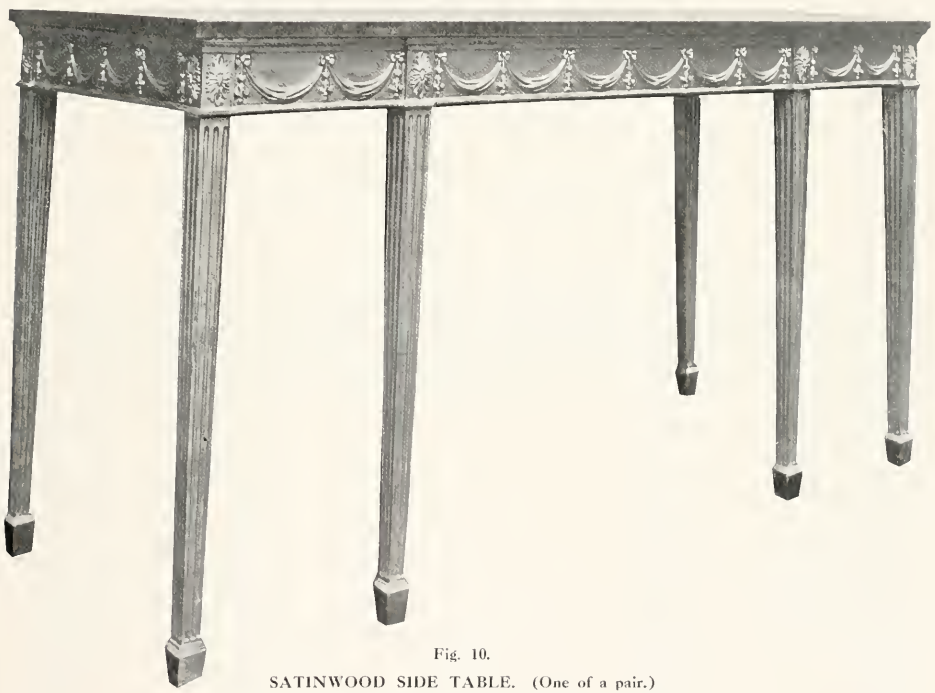

Fig. 10.
SATINWOOD SIDE TABLE. (One of a pair.)
In the possession of C. J. Charles, Esq.
6 ft. 9 ins. long × 3 ft. 3 ins. high × 2 ft. 3 ins. deep.
Date about 1770.

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excepting where they have been preserved in the mansions for which they were especially designed and made, are rarely original. The marbles of the Adam period do not appear to have been of exceptional kind or quality ; inferior statuary is by no means uncommon. Verde Antico, Siena, and Florentine appear to have been the kinds usually selected, although there are records which appear to show that Robert Adam contemplated the importation, if he did not actually secure, a consignment of the ancient red marble, "Africano Sanguigno," from the ruins of Rome. I have never seen this marble used in actual Adam-designed work, although some use is made of "Griotte" from Languedoc, a red shell-marble of handsome appearance.

Fig. 9 is a typical Adam table, semicircular in plan, the frieze carved with the honeysuckle ornament so usual on the acroteria of Grecian temples. The square tapered legs are enriched on three sides with applied oval pateræ, below which are fronded honeysuckles with pendant husks below. The original marble top of this table is missing, this having been made good with a thin slab of wood, painted and decorated.

Fig. 10 is a table, one of a pair, in satinwood, and is probably of later date than the preceding examples. The frieze is well carved, the squares of the legs with oval pateræ of the usual Adam type, and the panels between with swags of drapery and fuchsia "drops." The legs are fluted on three sides, and finish in tapered feet.

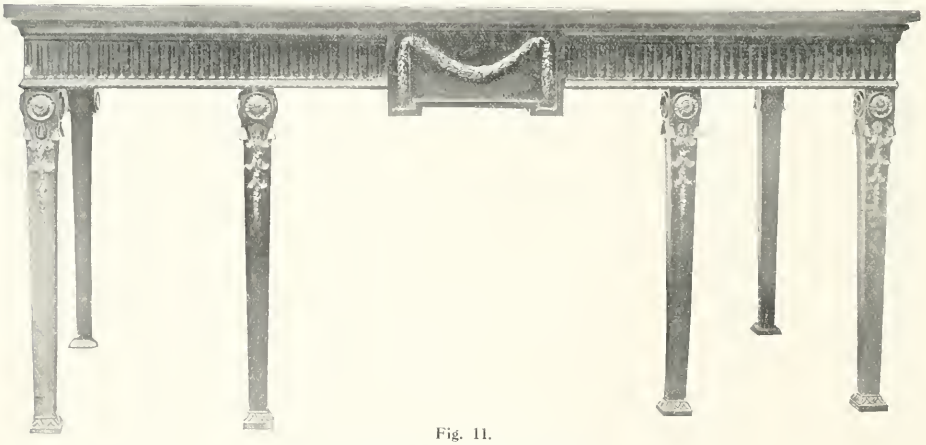

Fig. 11.
MAHOGANY SIDE TABLE.
6 ft. 9 ins. long × 3 ft. 3 ins. high · 1 ft. 7½ ins. deep.

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Fig. 11 is a mahogany side table, with a fluted frieze and panelled central tablet enriched with an applied laurelled swag. The tapered legs are crested with oval pateræ, from which three husks depend. They finish in carved and moulded block feet. Fig. 12 is of similar form, but of more ambitious design. The legs are surmounted by carved rams' heads on the corners, with swags of drapery below. In the centre is an oval frame containing an open book held by a laurelled ribbon. Below this is a pendant swag of knotted drapery. This table is prepared and gilt, and has a mahogany top—an evident substitution for the original marble.

Fig. 13 is another gilded table, of smaller size, and more delicate proportion. It has a similar pateræd frieze as in Fig. 7, here of ovals instead of circles. Fig. 14 is a mahogany table of a usual fashion of this period, probably made to stand between a pair of pedestals surmounted by urns, as shown later in Figs. 25 and 26.

Robert Adam used the wall mirror, in conjunction with the pier table, with considerable effect in many of his severely classical interiors, as at Osterley Park, the palatial home, at that date, of Robert Child, the famous banker. In Fig. 15 one of these pier tables surmounted by a tall, framed mirror, is shown. Divorced from its surroundings, the table appears to be overweighted, but in the proper place these pier tables and glasses produced a very handsome effect in combination. This example is painted white, with the ornament picked out with gold.

Fig. 12.
GILT TABLE WITH MAHOGANY TOP.
6 ft. 4 ins. long · 2 ft. 6 ins. deep · 3 ft. high.

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Fig. 16 illustrates another fashion—a white-and-gold table with the top veneered with satinwood, inlaid with marqueterie and decorated with painted garlands of flowers and medallions. The carved fringing under the frieze was a favourite conceit of Robert Adam, and was extensively used for window cornices, the imitation being frequently painted to accord with the material of the curtains and valances.

Fig. 17 is a gilt table, one of a pair, where the top is entirely painted and decorated. A protecting glass is a necessity with tables of this kind. Fig. 18 is another, and larger, example of these elaborate side tables, which were designed in fairly considerable numbers by the brothers Adam for their wealthy clients.

Fig. 19 is a beech table, painted and gilt, the top veneered with satinwood and banded with mahogany, the band being painted with garlands of flowers and edged with a cross-banding of tulip wood. In the original instance this decorated band was

Fig. 13.
GILT TABLE WITH MARBLE TOP.
4 ft. long · 2 ft. deep · 3 ft. high.

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probably continued along the back of the top. It is not easy to account for the vicissitudes which so much of the eighteenth-century furniture has undergone, especially such as would necessitate the replacing of a decorated band with a strip of satinwood, as on this table. It is difficult to imagine a table as delicate as this being surmounted by a pier glass, although the moulded base would cover the portion of the top over this satinwood strip. Fig. 19 may be regarded as a good example of cabinet-maker designing, as distinct from the usual quasi-architectural character of nearly all of the work of Robert and James Adam.

Fig. 20 is a table of sycamore, stained a reddish brown, and with an applied composition ornament in the detestable fashion of this period. The top is veneered with figured sycamore, stained with oxide of iron—usually known as "hare-wood"—and inlaid with a marqueterie of holly and ebony. The semi-oval in the centre of the back line of the top is of thuja, a wood similar in figure but darker in colour than amboyna. Fig. 21 is another of these composition enriched tables; in this example the framing is gilt, and the top is veneered with plane tree and inlaid with rather coarse marqueterie.

Fig. 14.
MAHOGANY SIDE TABLE.
5 ft. 3 ins. long × 2 ft. 2 ins. deep × 2 ft. 11 ins. high.

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Fig. 15.
WHITE AND GOLD PIER TABLE AND GLASS.
Table 4 ft. 7 ins. wide · 3 ft. 2 ins. high.
Pierglass 4 ft. 5 ins. wide · 7 ft. 9 ins. high.

In the table, two views of which are shown in Figs. 22 and 23, the influence of Michael Angelo Pergolesi can be noticed in a very marked degree. Pergolesi was one of many of the foreign artists—or decorators would perhaps be the better name—who were either introduced into England by Robert Adam, or were content to seek his patronage. Pergolesi differs from others, such as Antonio Zucchi and Giovanni Battista Cipriani, in publishing a book of his designs, where what is due to Pergolesi himself is very mediocre, and what is really good must be credited to others. Cipriani was an artist of no mean ability. Born in 1727, at Florence, he executed two altar-pieces for the abbey of St. Michael at Pelago at a comparatively early age. In 1750 he was at Rome, where he studied for three years, coming to England shortly afterwards in company with Sir William Chambers. He was one of twenty-two artists who signed the petition to George III. for the institution of the Royal Academy, and he contributed four of the panels to the ceiling of the Academy library at Somerset House. Apart from his decorative work at Whitehall, Windsor, Buckingham House, and elsewhere, Cipriani painted a considerable number of the medallions on the ceilings and furniture designed

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Fig. 16.

WHITE AND GOLD SIDE TABLE WITH SATINWOOD TOP.

5 ft. 4 ins. long · 3 ft. 2 ins. high.

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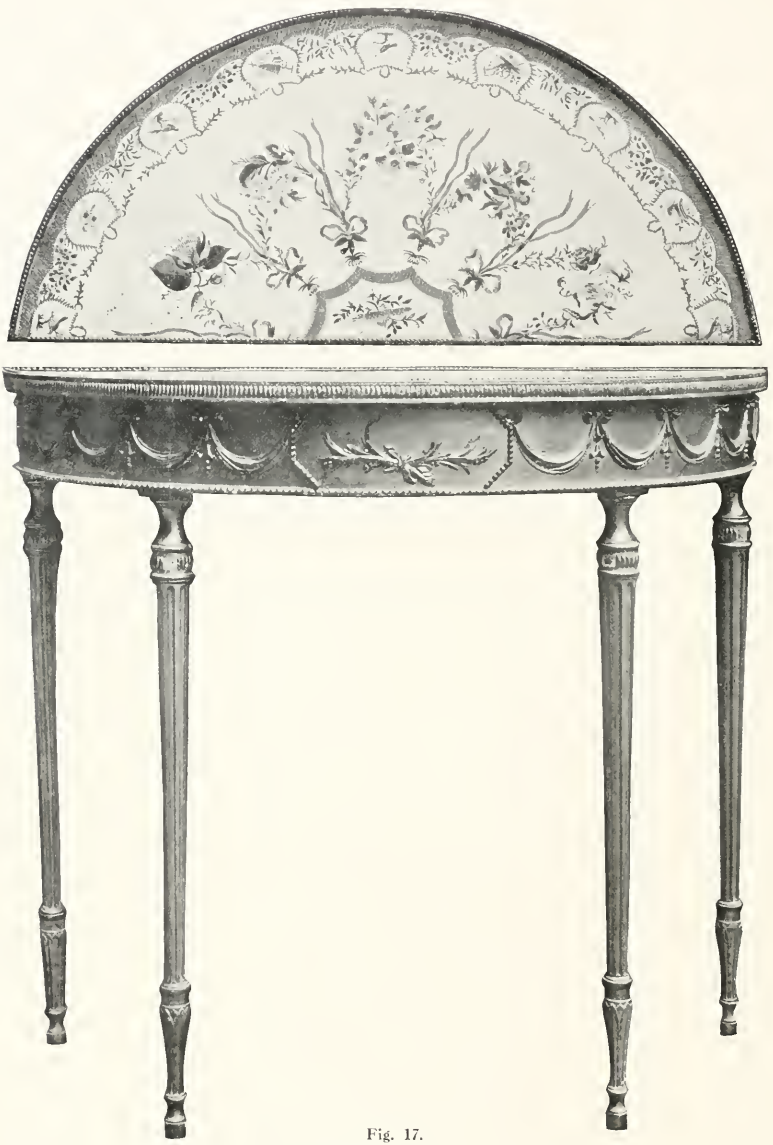

Fig. 17.

GILT TABLE WITH PAINTED TOP. (One of a pair.)

3 ft. 5 ins. long · 1 ft. 7 ins. deep × 2 ft. 11 ins. high.

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Fig. 18.

GILT TABLE WITH PAINTED TOP.

4 ft. long · 2 ft. 7½ ins. high.

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Fig. 19.

PAINTED AND GILT TABLE. (One of a pair.)

4 ft. 7½ ins. wide × 1 ft. 9 ins. deep × 2 ft. 10½ ins. high.

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Fig. 20.

STAINED SYCAMORE TABLE WITH MARQUETERIE TOP.

5 ft. 0 ins. wide × 2 ft. 3 ins. deep × 2 ft. 9 ins. high.

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by Adam, and he also assisted Pergolesi in the preparation of the designs for his book. Both were equally indebted to Bartolozzi for the fidelity and spirit of his engravings.

Pergolesi must have been invaluable to Robert Adam; indeed, it is doubtful whether the really characteristic Adam detail in the original drawings in the Soane Museum be not the work of the former; it is certain that the degree of skill displayed varies considerably in different sketches. In the table illustrated here, Fig. 22, the ornament is typical Pergolesi, the medallions equally as characteristic Cipriani.

Robert Adam, in conjunction with the school of Hepplewhite, assisted greatly in the evolution of the modern sideboard. The Tudor and Stuart buffets, which had gone quite out of fashion by the commencement of the eighteenth century, were designed not only for the display of silver, pewter, or china, but also to contain the furnishings of the dining-table. During the reign of Anne and the first two Georges the only equivalent for the buffet appears to have been the side table, a piece which was often made without

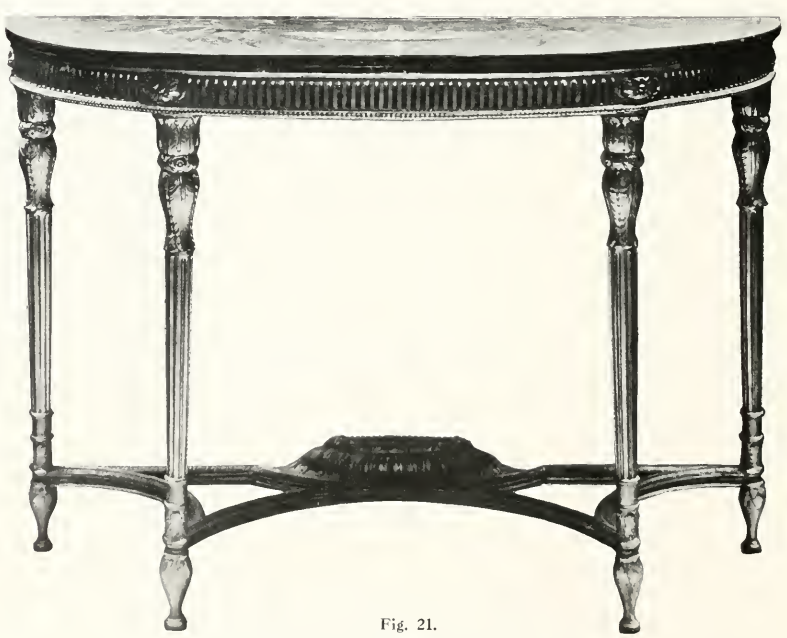

Fig. 21.
GILT TABLE WITH MARQUETERIE TOP.
In the possession of Messrs. Colling & Young.
4 ft. 6 ins. wide × 1 ft. 8 ins. deep × 2 ft. 10½ ins. high.

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Fig. 22.

PAINTED AND DECORATED TABLE. (One of a pair.)

In the possession of C. J. Charles, Esq.

5 ft. 9 ins. long × 3 ft. 3 ins. high × 2 ft. 2 ins. deep.

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drawers, and was never adapted to contain anything beyond table cutlery and napery. The creation of the sideboard as a piece of furniture capable of fulfilling the functions of the old-time buffet, was probably due to Hepplewhite, and reached its utilitarian limit in the hands of Thomas Sheraton. Robert Adam, however, appears to have been the pioneer of the pedestal sideboard—an article of furniture both ornamental and useful—although it is possible that he may have borrowed the idea from a cabinet-maker. The pedestal and the urn were, however, such characteristic pieces in the style of Adam, that in this particular the architect may have been the instructor of the furniture designer.

In the hands of Robert Adam the central table is always kept distinct from the pedestals, and a good idea of the *ensemble* of an "Adam" dining-room is shown in the frontispiece drawing to this volume. It is natural that the association between the five pieces comprising an Adam sideboard should be broken during the course of a century

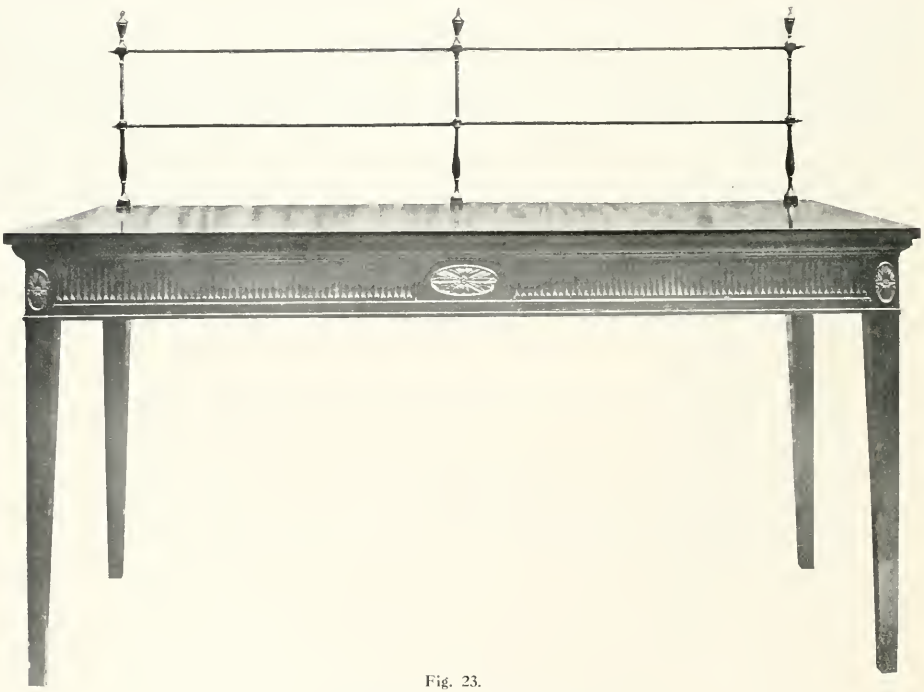

Fig. 23.

MAHOGANY SIDE TABLE.

5 ft. 8 ins. long × 2 ft. 4 ins. deep × 2 ft. 10 ins. high.

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and a half, and we consequently find pedestals which have lost their urns, or *vice versa*, or side tables which have been divorced from both. Fig. 23 is one of these tables, and Figs. 24 and 25 the pedestals and urns. The brass galleries which were designed for these sideboards were frequently of a very elaborate description; an example will be given later when the *Works in Architecture of Robert and James Adam* is considered. Sometimes drawers were provided in the friezes of the central tables, but they were more frequently absent in the Adam examples. The doors of the pedestals were

Fig. 24.

Fig. 25.

MAHOGANY PEDESTALS AND URNS.

5 ft. 2 ins. high × 1 ft. 2½ ins. wide.

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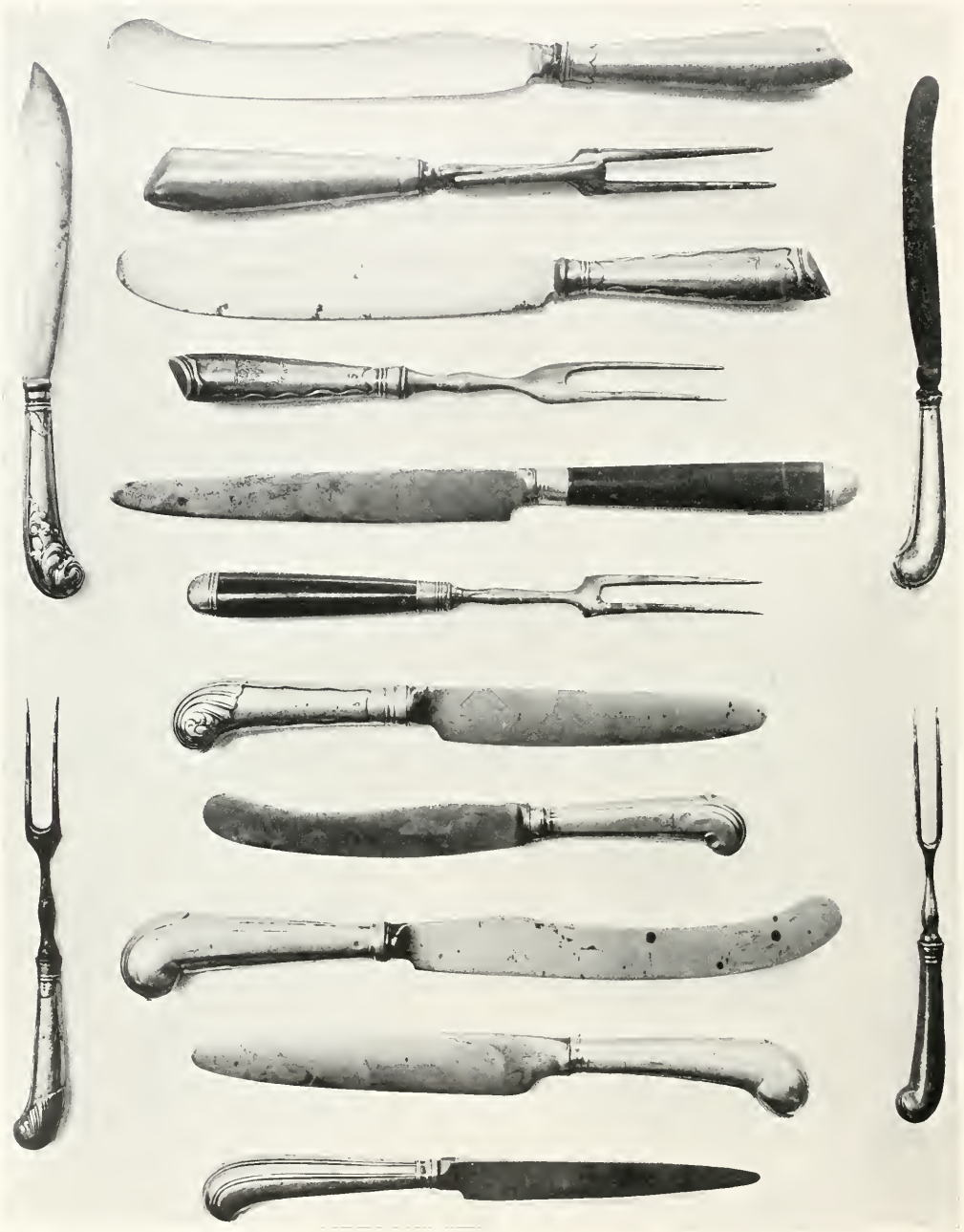

Fig. 26.

KNIVES AND FORKS OF THE ADAM PERIOD.

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always hinged on the ends, and various devices were adopted for the fitting of the interiors. The one on the right hand was sometimes, but rarely, reserved for wine, that on the left being generally fitted with two or three racked shelves lined with lead, and a small heater for the warming of plates and dishes. The urns were always hollow, those turned from solid wood being invariably of much later date. They were either fitted with taps and lined with lead or foil for the purpose of holding rose-water, or made with a top to rise on a central shaft with the lower part terraced and cut out on each tier, to hold knives, forks, and spoons. The latter device was more usual with Hepplewhite and Sheraton, Adam usually designing his sideboards with two or three slope-top knife-boxes in addition to the pair of urns. Very often the latter were purely ornamental, fulfilling no useful function whatever.

The knife-boxes of the Adam period are usually sloped on the top and rounded on the front, frequently fitted with hasps, hinges, and lock-plates of silver. They are generally

Fig. 27.
MAHOGANY WINE COOLER.
In the possession of Ralph Seddon, Esq.

Digitized by Microsoft ®

covered with black shagreen,* left in the rough state. The knives in use at this period were of the kind known as "pistol handle" or "hanger blade." Examples of the knives and forks of 1760-75 are shown in Fig. 26. As hall-marking was not compulsory, and was subject to a duty, it is rare to find the silver ferrules stamped with anything beyond the maker's mark, and a certain index of date is therefore usually absent.

With the introduction of sparkling wines, a further adjunct to the sideboard, the "sarcophagus," came into vogue. Fig. 27 is an example, and although these

* Shagreen, shagrin, from the Turkish *saghri* = the back of a horse, is of two kinds, and prepared in several ways. (1) A leather or parchment, prepared from the hides of horses, asses, or camels, without tanning. The pieces are softened by immersion in water, and after being cleared of hair, are spread on a flat table and covered with the seeds of the "Goose-foot" (*Chenopodium album*). A layer of hard felt is then laid on top and the seeds pressed into the skin by trampling or weights, which results in a peculiar granular finish. Shagreen is dyed green with sal-ammoniac and copper filings, red with cochineal, and black with logwood and lamp black. The kind referred to above has a small grain, and is left in this state. (2) The skin of the shagreen ray, *Raja fullonica*, found off the northern coasts of England and Scotland. It is covered with minute spines, and after it is glued to the article it is intended to cover, the spines are filed smooth and then glass-papered. In its natural state this variety of shagreen is of an ivory shade, and takes a good polish after friction with oil and "rotten-stone." It was rarely used in the eighteenth century.

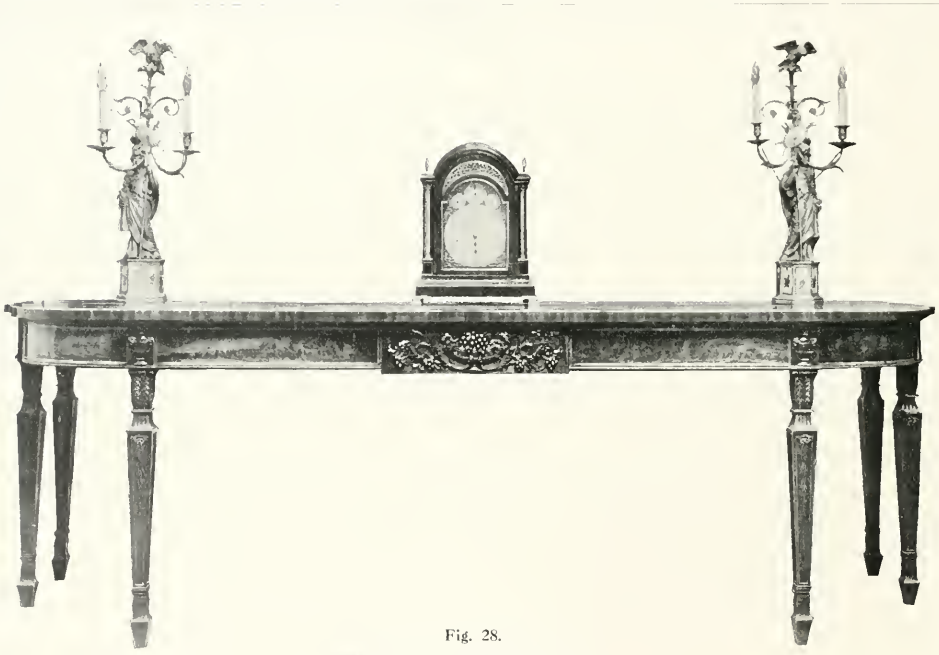

Fig. 28.

MAHOGANY SIDE TABLE.

In the possession of Messrs. Gill & Reigate.

9 ft. 6 ins. long × 3 ft. 0 ins. deep × 3 ft. 1 in. high.

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sarcophagi became very usual pieces of furniture during the first years of the nineteenth century, they were rare in 1760-70. In this piece the wood is hard mahogany, with bands and ringed lions' heads of brass. The interior is lead lined, to hold bottles in ice.

Fig. 28 is an important mahogany sideboard of this date, with a central tablet carved with bunches of grapes. The top is veneered with mahogany, banded with cross-cut rosewood and edged with a corner line of satinwood. The frieze is banded with sycamore. This table is one of a pair, made for a dining-room of very large dimensions, and probably intended to act as a side table in conjunction with a pedestal sideboard. The workmanship is of fine quality, although the top is veneered on pine, but this was quite usual in the furniture of this period.

The furniture designed by the brothers Adam, or made under their supervision, appears to fall naturally into three classes. In the first we have the true Adam work, distinguished by a cold classical feeling and an air of state rather than of comfort. In the

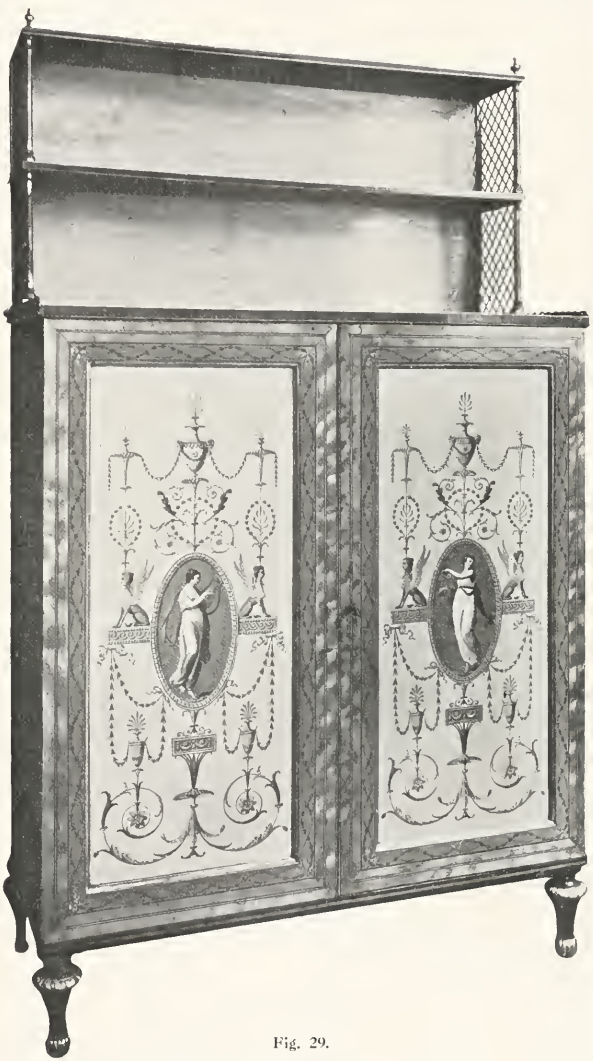

Fig. 29.
SATINWOOD AND ENAMELLED CABINET.
In the possession of Messrs. Colling & Young.
4 ft. 9 ins. high × 2 ft. 9½ ins. wide × 1 ft. 2 ins. deep.

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second may be placed the wholly or partially painted or enamelled furniture, decorated with the Adam ornament and medallions of classical figures in the manner of Cipriani. This may be described as Pergolesi furniture rather than Adam, although the latter is distinctly the creator of the style. In the third category must be placed the Adam designs as rationalised and modified by Hepplewhite and his school. This class merges gradually from the Adam to the true Hepplewhite furniture, and it is difficult to lay down any invariable line of demarcation.

Fig. 29 is a good example of a "Pergolesi" cabinet. The bookshelves and the framing of the doors are veneered with East India satinwood of exceptional figure. The door panels are finished with a ground of white enamel and decorated with medallions flanked with Grecian sphinxes, and surrounded by typical Adam ornament, painted in green and blue. The carved members of the turned stump feet are gilt, and the

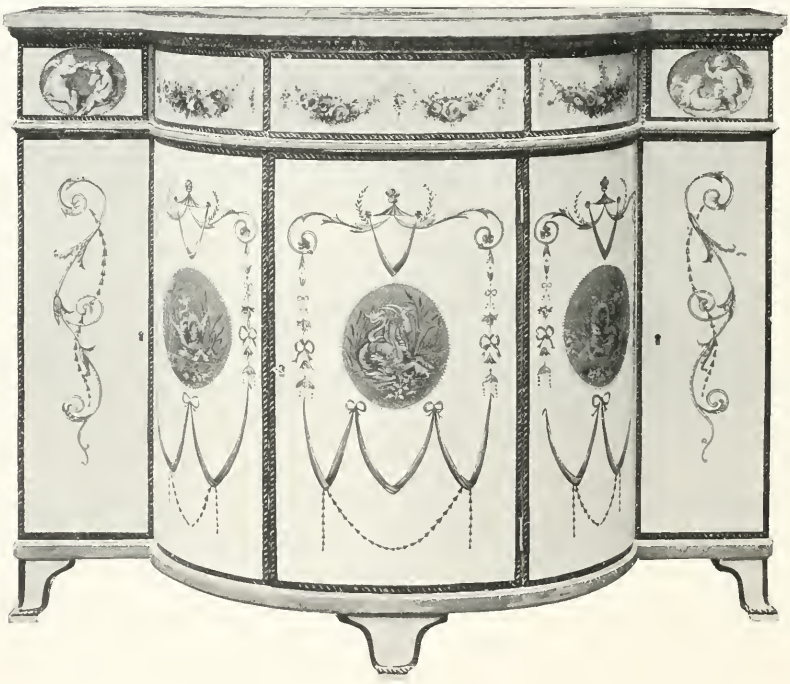

Fig. 30.

PAINTED AND DECORATED COMMODE.

In the possession of C. J. Charles, Esq.

3 ft. 9 ins. long × 2 ft. 11 ins. high.

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Fig. 31.
PAINTED AND DECORATED COMMODE.
In the possession of C. J. Charles, Esq.
7 ft. long × 3 ft. 3 ins. high × 1 ft. 9 ins. deep.

supporting spindles of the bookshelves and the lattice-work at the sides are of gilded brass.

Figs. 30, 31, and 32 are two Pergolesi commodes, decorated with ornament and medallions on a painted ground. These two pieces illustrate the endeavour to provide furniture, light in colour, to accord with the white rooms and marble mantelpieces of the Adam period. It was probably found in practice that even satinwood was too heavy in tone for these white apartments, but the result was a stiff artificiality, where the genuine decorative possibilities of fine figured timber were neglected. The taste was, no doubt, an inspiration from the French capital, which culminated in the Empire style of the close of the century. Sheraton did something to stem the tide, and he succeeded, in large measure, in restoring mahogany and satinwood to popular favour. This painted furniture had the serious drawback of being exceedingly prone to damage, and to restore the decoration where it had been scratched or defaced was a task of considerable difficulty.

Fig. 32.
THE SIDE OF THE COMMODE (Fig. 31).

Robert Adam's really successful attempts in the

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designing of upholstered furniture were very few in number. He found it more practicable, no doubt, to superimpose his details on the chairs and settees designed by Hepplewhite and his contemporaries. A few characteristic examples are given here, but this branch of our subject can be better considered, and at greater length, when the chair work of Hepplewhite is reviewed.

Fig. 33 is a mahogany window seat in the characteristic Adam manner, and illustrates a type with which Robert Adam was conspicuously successful, the general form evidently appealing to his sense of the classical. This seat is upholstered with a satin covering, embroidered with silk, which is probably original. Robert Adam evidently took great care to design suitable coverings for his chairs and settees; in the case of those made for Osterley Park, three or four carefully coloured drawings were often prepared, and discarded, as we can gather from the original sketches in the Soane Museum. This rejection was probably on Robert Adam's part rather than on that of his client, and he appears to have been fastidious in the extreme, drawing after drawing, each minutely detailed and tinted, being prepared for the one piece, which, when made, often differed from them all.

Fig. 34 is a mahogany arm-chair, the design of which is evidently influenced by the French Louis XVI. to a greater extent than is usual with the work of Adam. Fig. 35 shows his rendering of the wheel-back chair, which was so popular at this date.

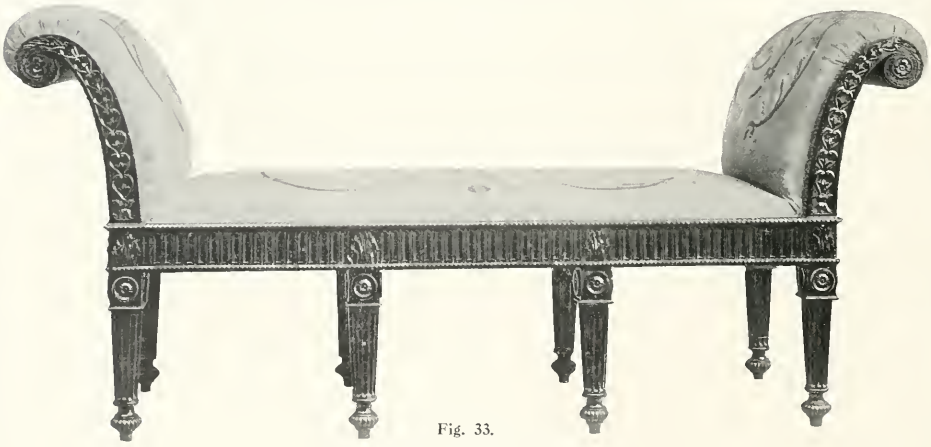

Fig. 33.

MAHOGANY WINDOW SEAT.

In the possession of the Earl of Coventry.

4 ft. 10½ ins. long × 1 ft. 6 ins. deep × 2 ft. 5 ins. high to top of arm.

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Fig. 34.

MAHOGANY ARM CHAIR.

2 ft. 1⅞ ins. across front of seat.
3 ft. 1½ ins. high from floor to top of back.

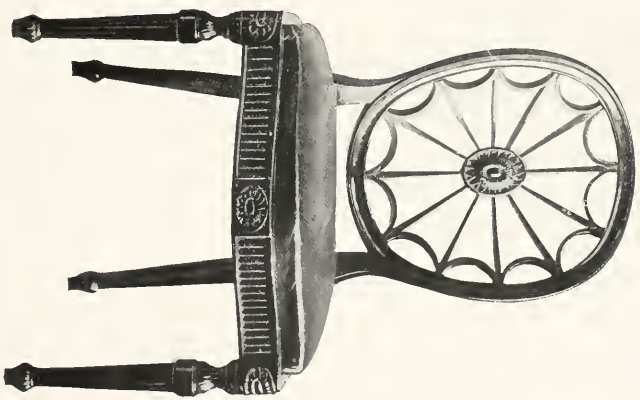

Fig. 35.

MAHOGANY CHAIR.

In the possession of Edgar Willet, Esq.

1 ft. 10¾ ins. across front of seat.
2 ft. 11½ ins. from floor to top of back.

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Fig. 36.
SMALL CHAIR.

Figs. 36, 37, and 38.

MAHOGANY CHAIRS

(from a set comprising 11 small chairs, 6 wardens' chairs, and 1 master's chair).

In the possession of the Drapers' Company.

Master's Chair.

4 ft. 6 ins. high from floor to top of back.
2 ft. 1 in. width across front of seat.
1 ft. 11½ ins. from floor to top of seat.
1 ft. 7½ ins. depth of seat from back to front.

Warden's Chair.

3 ft. 5 ins. high from floor to top of back.
1 ft. 9 ins. width across front of seat.
1 ft. 9½ ins. from floor to top of seat.
1 ft. 6 ins. depth of seat.

Small Chair.

3 ft. 1 in. high from floor to top of back.
1 ft. 9 ins. width across front of seat.
1 ft. 7½ ins. from floor to top of seat.
1 ft. 6 ins. depth of seat.

Fig. 37.
WARDEN'S CHAIR.

Fig. 38.
MASTER'S CHAIR.

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Fig. 39.

MAHOGANY CHAIR.

3 ft. 0 ins. high from floor to top of back.
1 ft. 10½ ins. across front of seat.
1 ft. 6 ins. depth of seat.

The leather-covered seat is made to drop in on a rebated seat-framing. Figs. 36, 37, and 38 are the small, warden's, and master's chairs from an important set in the possession of the Drapers' Company, and are thoroughly typical of the work of Adam. The pattern of the small chair does not quite agree with the others, the centre of the oval having a carved patera from which the piercing of the back radiates. In the warden's and master's chairs the oval is flat, banded with satinwood, and with the Drapers' device—a ram—inlaid with the same wood. The oval back of the small chair is also slightly larger than that of the warden's chair, 16 inches and 15¾ inches respectively, whereas the opposite might have been expected. In the former, also, the seat framing is veneered, or rather faced with ⅛ inch mahogany on pine, whereas in the latter, and in the master's chair, the rails are of solid mahogany. The small chairs are probably of later date, made to match the others, the mahogany used, although of fine quality, being of different grain and texture. The entire set consists of eleven single (probably twelve originally), six warden's

Fig. 40.

PAINTED AND DECORATED CHAIR.

3 ft. 1 in. high from floor to top of back.
1 ft. 0½ ins. across front of seat.
1 ft. 5½ ins. depth of seat.
1 ft. 7 ins. from floor to top of seat.

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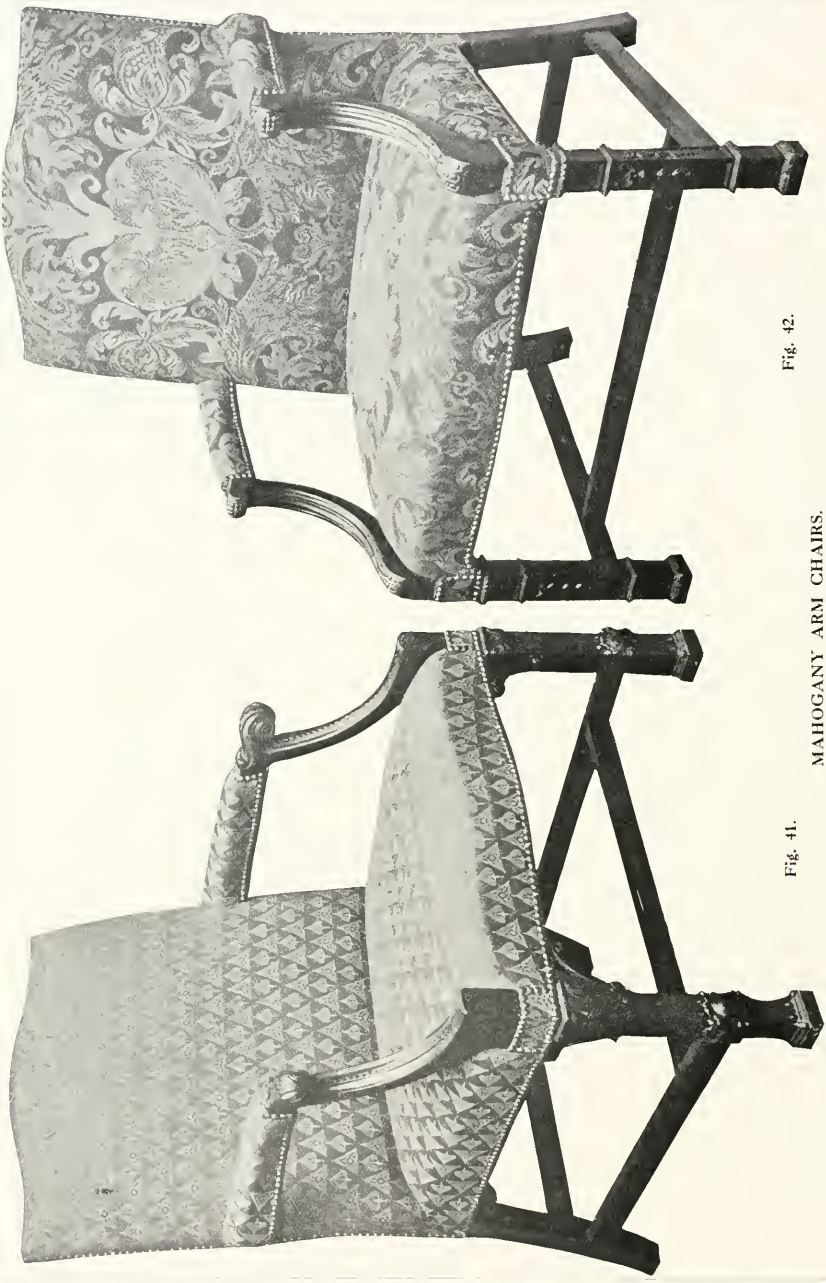

Fig. 41.

3 ft. 7 ins. high from floor to top of back.
2 ft. 3 ins. across front of seat.
2 ft. 0½ ins. width of back.
2 ft. 2 ins. depth of seat outside.

MAHOGANY ARM CHAIRS.

Fig. 42.

3 ft. 6 ins. from floor to top of back.
2 ft. 3½ ins. across front of seat.
2 ft. 0 ins. width of back.
2 ft. 2 ins. depth of seat outside.

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and one master's chairs, and all are covered with the same crimson morocco, banded and studded with brass-headed nails. No record of their manufacture appears to have been preserved, but there is every indication that the designs of the wardens' and master's chairs are from the hand of Robert Adam.

Fig. 39 illustrates one of these oval-backed chairs, with the Adam detail still prominent, but betraying the guiding influence of the chair-maker in several ways. The back legs are prolonged above the seat framing and form the upright of the oval. In the Drapers' Company's chairs the oval backs are built up on a flat piece which is tenoned into the seat framing, a method of construction essentially weak, and which has resulted in many breakages from time to time. In Fig. 39 the arm is typical of Hepplewhite's chairs, sweeping round in graceful lines to the seat framing, and "hipped" over the front of the oval back. The legs are tapered, with a small socketed square above, and give an appearance of strength which is absent in Figs. 36, 37, and 38, and render the stretcher rails unnecessary to the design. To what degree of refinement and delicacy these "wheel-back" chairs could be carried by practical chair-makers such as Hepplewhite, without destroying the appearance of stability, may be noticed in Fig. 40. A very favourite

Fig. 43.

MAHOGANY CHAIR WITH ORMOLU MOUNTINGS.

3 ft. 5 ins. from floor to top of back.
2 ft. 2½ ins. across front of seat.
2 ft. 2 ins. depth of seat outside.

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detail with Hepplewhite was the tapering of legs on the inside faces only; a feature which imparted a peculiar appearance of grip and power to otherwise fragile furniture. This inside taper will be noticed later on, when the work of Hepplewhite is considered.

Figs. 41 and 42 are two large arm-chairs of carved mahogany, showing the Adam influence in the details of the front legs. Both of these models have been adapted from the square arm-chairs so extensively popularised by Chippendale, and of which several illustrations were given in the second volume of this book.

The French fashion of mounting furniture with ornaments of gilded brass—ormolu—influenced the work of Robert Adam to a considerable extent, and several designs of his are preserved, specifically designed for this embellishment. The furniture of the dining-room at Harewood House—Gawthorp, as it was then known—is an instance of this. Fig. 43 is an example of this ormolu-mounted furniture, which did not enjoy an extended fashion, however, when dissociated from the French cabriole leg. In his "wall furniture" Robert Adam found an effective substitute for ormolu in carving executed in box and pear woods, sharply cut and finished with an agate tool. The effect of this, in conjunction with rich mahogany, is often exceedingly fine, but in the purposed suppression of all virility in the carving, and in the choice of the woods used, one has the uncomfortable impression that an attempt has been made to imitate composition ornament in carving, instead of the reverse process. But the age of Robert Adam was essentially one of sham—stucco, composition, and scagliola taking the place of the more valuable materials and masquerading in their guise with the most unblushing effrontery.

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Chapter IV.

Adam Chimney-pieces, Pier Glasses, etc.*

MENTION has already been made of the collection of the original Adam drawings preserved in the Soane Museum. These sketches are contained in some fifty-three large folio albums, and cover a period from about 1762 to 1790 in a remarkably complete manner. Nearly all are signed by Robert Adam, who appears to have been the moving spirit of the firm. He appears to have been almost incredibly painstaking in his work, three or four sketches for the same piece, differing only in very minor details, and each elaborately finished and tinted, being rather the rule than the exception. Added to this, a comparison of the actual pieces still existing—such as at Bowood, Kenwood, Harewood, Sion, and Nostell—with the final sketches in the Soane Museum, indicate that the process of revision—and frequently of radical alteration—was still continued during the manufacture of the piece. Several chairs and settees were designed for Sir Abraham Hume, where the actual covering fabrics were also made to accord, after Robert Adam's sketches. This wonderful collection of original drawings, comprising anything from architectural elevations to carpets and fabrics, from interiors to door furniture, indicate not only a most remarkable activity, but also a keen appreciation of the value of his work on the part of Robert Adam, as nearly all of the finished sketches must have been at least submitted to, if not left with, his clients, and drawings have a peculiar habit of being mislaid when they are sent from one seat to another to catch a wealthy patron in a moment of leisure.

A careful examination of these sketches in chronological order will show, not only how the "Adam style" developed in the hands of its creator after the date of his return to England from his architectural wanderings in Italy and Dalmatia, until almost the date of his death, but also, curiously enough, how the same reckless disregard of the nature of the materials to be employed persists, with hardly any modification, during the same period. His door traceries, impossibly delicate for execution in wood, probably originated the dictum of Hepplewhite—who followed Adam very closely in many of the designs in the *Cabinet Maker and Upholsterers' Guide*—that they were intended for execution in modelled lead. In certain rare instances, especially in the

* *The reproductions from the original drawings of the brothers Adam, used in illustration of this chapter, have been taken by the special sanction of the Trustees of the Soane Museum, Lincoln's Inn Fields, London.*

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fanlights of doors at this date, this recommendation was actually adopted, the lead-work being gilded to alleviate the "meagreness" of its appearance. Sheen House, in the East Sheen Road, demolished some nine years ago, contained some examples of this ornamental lead-work.

It is, perhaps, in his mirrors and pier glasses that Robert Adam allows his extravagant imagination the fullest play; and, in contradistinction to these, his chimney-pieces are the most rational of all his creations, although even here much of the finer detail was only possible of execution by painting on wood or inlaying in marble. Frequently even the latter was decorated by the painter's brush more than by the mason's chisel or graver. As a necessary corollary, it is in his designs for chimney-pieces where Robert Adam departs the least from established forms, and where he confines himself to superimposing his characteristic details on to Georgian models. Fig. 44 indicates the last phase of the Palladian style as expounded by James Gibbs, Nicholas Hawksmoor, and their fellows. The greater refinement of detail as compared with the work

Fig. 44.
PAINTED WOOD CHIMNEY-PIECE.
6 ft. 3 ins. length of shelf. 5 ft. 1 in. total height.
Date about 1745–50.

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of the earlier Georgian period will be remarked, and the general proportions of the ornament are almost as delicate as in the earlier work of Adam. It was the models of this type which were obviously adopted for much of the work at Sion, between 1758 and 1763. The first sketch selected for illustration is a design for a chimney-piece for the drawing-room there, and is dated 1762. It lacks the precision of nearly all his work of some four or five years later, and details such as the fluted ogee frieze —here drawn disproportionately small in comparison with the members of the shelf above—are survivals of the earlier Georgian manner, imperfectly comprehended. The decoration of the jambs is feeble, and the columns are almost irritatingly ornate. Adam had not yet settled the principles of his own style, and we find him at this date designing in "Batty Langley Gothic" for Strawberry Hill. If an architect's practice can be measured by the number of speculative drawings which are made in

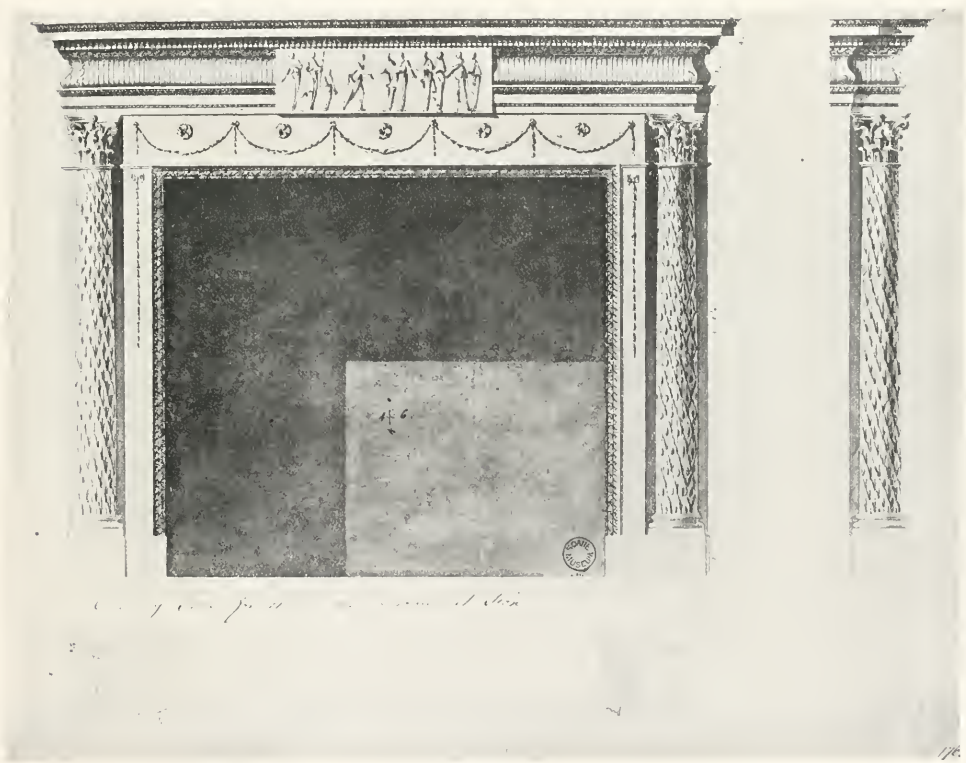

Fig. 45.

"*Chimney Piece for the Drawing room at Sion.*" 1762.

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his office—and this is a fairly accurate criterion, the proportion of these drawings being, of course, in inverse ratio to the extent of his connection—Robert Adam must have had much of his later renown yet to acquire at this period, in spite of the "gilt-edged" list of subscribers to the *Ruins of Diocletian's Palace at Spalatro* in 1764. One most elaborate set of details in the Soane Museum shows bas-reliefs, beautifully drawn and shaded, for a suggested scheme for the Houses of Parliament—an abortive proposition, as the old buildings remained until they were burned down in 1834, when Sir Charles Barry—or Welby Pugin—achieved the present design in open competition, and between the years 1840 and 1852 the nation's lords and commoners were housed in the Gothic manner at a cost of over three millions of money.

Fig. 46, a year later than the previous design, shows some improvement, although here Robert Adam is still obsessed with the classical manner. The *Ruins at Spalatro* must have been in course of preparation at this time—it was published in the following year—and Adam was probably dominated by the Roman idea of form and ornament for some considerable period after this Audley End chimney-piece was designed.

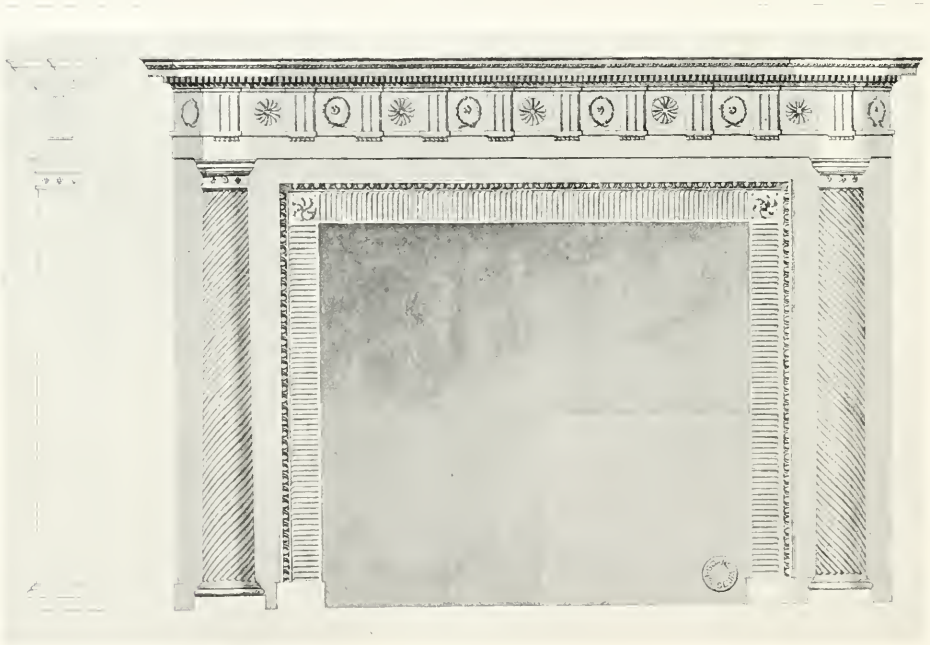

Fig. 46.

"*Chimney Piece for the Library at Audley End.*" 1763.

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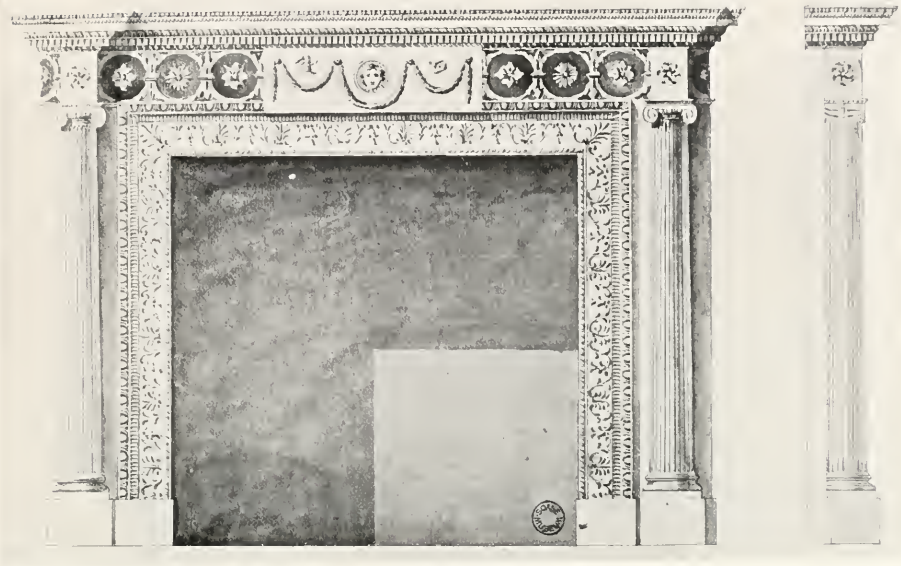

Fig. 47.

"*Chimney Piece for the Great room at Boxwood.*" 1763.

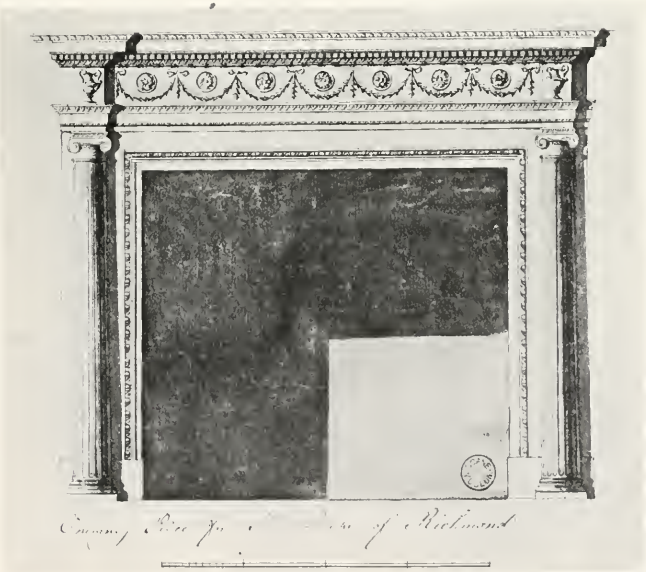

Fig. 48.

"*Chimney Piece for The Duke of Richmond.*" *Undated* (1765).

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Fig. 47 is one of two designs made for the "Great Room" at Bowood in 1763, the sketches differing only in unimportant details, although each is carefully finished. In this drawing we have the Adam style fully developed, many of the details being familiar to students of the exteriors and interiors of the Adelphi buildings. A strong magnifying-glass is necessary to note the careful draughtsmanship of this sketch, especially in the decoration of the shelf-mouldings and those around the opening. Even the flutes of the columns are each shaded with the ruling-pen and graduated according to the taper of the shaft and the perspective. Fig. 48 is undated, but was made two years after the preceding sketch, of which it is a more simple variation. Only those who have had experience in the drawing and proportioning of the "Five Orders" can thoroughly appreciate the care taken in the measuring of these sketches. Nothing is apparently left to the eye to decide. The diameter of the column shaft bears the exact relation to its length as set forth by the authorities whom Adam followed. There is much that is weak in this design, such as the scanty opening moulding without reinforcing slips (some indication that the chimney-piece was

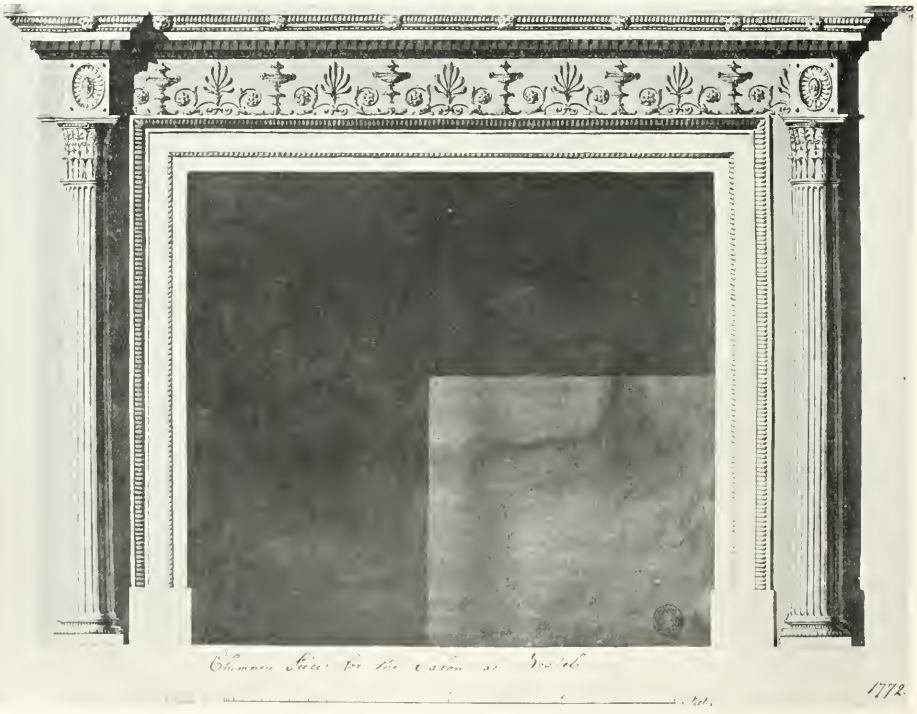

Fig. 49.

"Chimney Piece for the Salon at Yostel" 1772.

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designed for execution in marble), but nothing that is inaccurate. This sketch was probably intended for Richmond House in Whitehall rather than for Goodwood, but it does not appear to have ever been made. It was evidently designed for an important apartment, being 5 feet 8 inches in height to the top of the shelf, and with an opening 4 feet 5 inches wide by 4 feet high.

Fig. 49 is an unexecuted design for one of the saloons at Nostell Priory. Sir Rowland Winn appears to have been one of the earliest, and probably the best, of Robert Adam's fashionable clients. Although the new house had only been built some

Fig. 50.

CHIMNEY-PIECE OF WHITE AND GREEN MARBLE.

7 ft. 5 ins. length of shelf.

5 ft. 9 ins. total height.

Date about 1775.

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thirty-five years before Adam commenced his work at Nostell, he prepared an elaborate set of drawings for the remodelling of the east or principal front, a procedure which must have been in the nature of a speculation on the part of Adam, as the exterior was not touched, and Sir Rowland Winn would hardly have commissioned the work at this early date. The Nostell design is quite characteristic of Adam's best manner, when he departed from the classical traditions which had formerly fettered much of his work, without any loss of the true classical spirit. The shelf-moulding dotted with the eight lion-heads, and the carrying of the frieze ornament beyond the line of the opening moulding into the squares of the columns, are the only two doubtful features of the whole design.

In practice, chimney-pieces of the type of Fig. 49 were usually executed in white and coloured marbles, often with a very rich and effective appearance. Fig. 50 is an elaborate example of about this period, in second statuary and Connemara green marbles. A comparison of this photograph—as representing an actual piece—with the designs of Adam will show how much modification must have been necessary according to the materials employed. This detail does not appear to have ever troubled

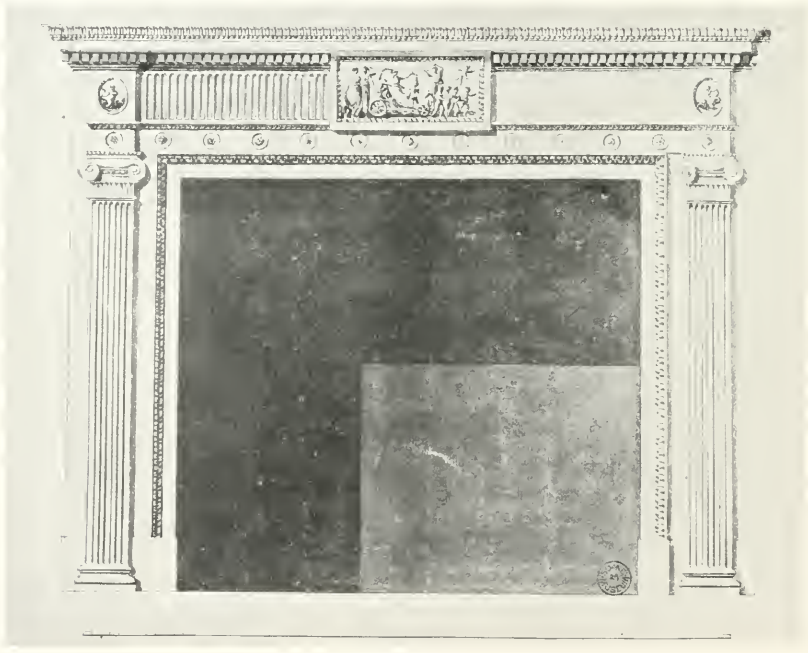

Fig. 51.

"Chimney Piece for the 3rd Drawing room at Ashburnham House." 1773.

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Robert Adam in the slightest degree. Some of his designs were made in wood and composition, others in marble and even stone, but there is nothing to distinguish the one class from the other. Fig. 50 is immediately recognisable as a marble piece, even if it were accurately drawn without any attempt at shading or colouring. The members of the shelf, and especially the detail of the opening surround, are characteristically marble details, whereas the same cannot be said for the Nostell sketch, which is possible only in wood, in the way in which it is designed.

Fig. 51 is a design made for Ashburnham House in 1773, and in spite of the treatment of the jambs is evidently intended for marble. Several variations of this pattern were drawn, although none appear to have been made. Fig. 52 is given to show a marble-mason's conception of this design. The flutes are inlaid with Siena,

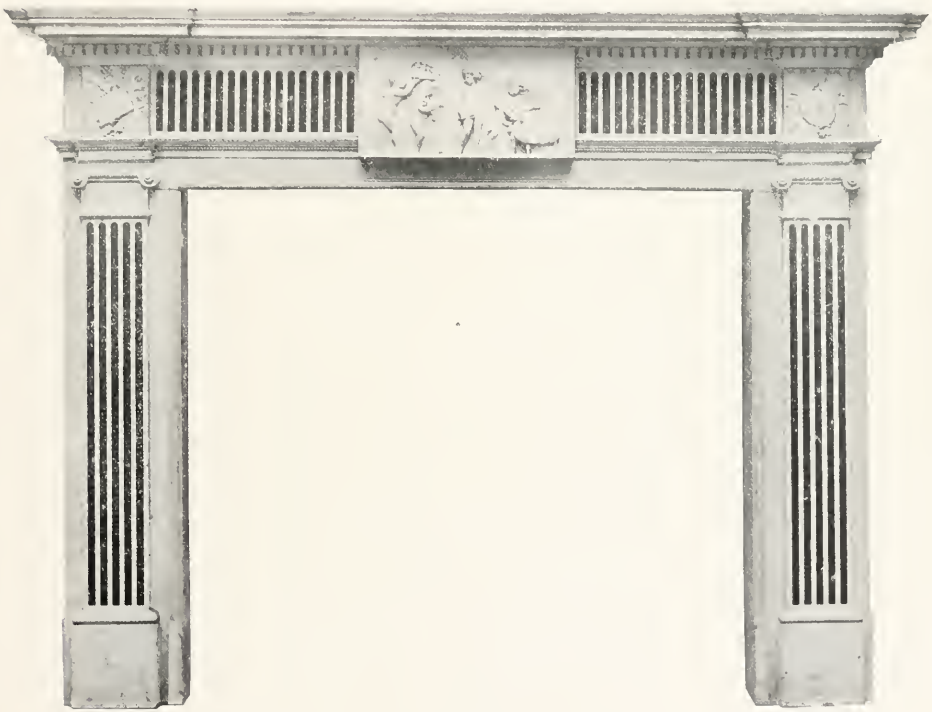

Fig. 52.

CHIMNEY-PIECE OF WHITE AND COLOURED MARBLE.

6 ft. 1 in. length of shelf.

4 ft. 9 ins. total height.

Date about 1775.

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the plaques of selected Carrara marbles. The jambs are jointed in the only practicable way with marble, a method either unknown to, or ignored by, Robert Adam.

Fig. 53 is in Adam's earlier manner, the sketch dating from 1768. With the exception of the central tablet, the details are precisely those used on the exterior of the Adelphi Terrace, in the pilasters and the string course. The tablet breaking over the frieze moulding and the members under the top are typical Adam marble details, although the decorated opening moulding suggests wood and carving, or more probably composition. Fig. 54 is some three years later in date, and is indicated as the second design for the first drawing-room at Harewood for Mr. Lascelles. The general scheme is unusually elaborate even for this date, and the carving details are drawn with great care. The name "Nolekens" is scribbled above the sketch, a reference, evidently, to Joseph Nollekens, R.A., a celebrated sculptor of this period, who was possibly responsible for the execution of the five circular plaques in the frieze. The date of this sketch coincides with the election of Nollekens to the Academy as Associate, and in the following year he received the higher status. Nollekens is notable rather for his industry than his genius; and being of penurious habits, and with the habit of choosing such only work as was directly remunerative, he amassed a con-

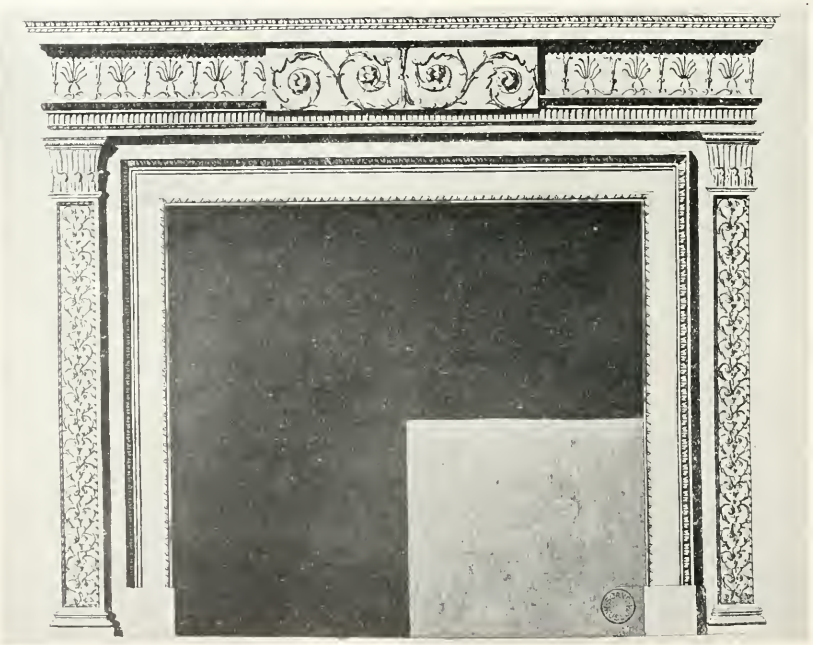

Fig. 53.

"*Chimney Piece for the Great Drawing room at Saltram.*" (*John Parker.*) 1768.

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siderable fortune. He paid the usual penalty of wealth in having a number of parasites, the most notable of whom, J. F. Smith, revenged himself, in *Nollekens and his Times*, for a legacy of only £100 out of a fortune of £200,000, by enlarging upon the rapacity and avarice of his patron. Nollekens died in 1823, at the age of eighty-six.

Robert Adam appears to have not only tolerated, but even encouraged, the use of substitutes, such as stucco for sculpture, composition for carving, and similar imitations. Perhaps his habit of designing without any distinct ideas as to processes and materials was responsible for this, in a large measure. Chippendale, with all his extravagancies, was, on the whole, a practical craftsman, and, excepting for sundry yieldings to temptations to puzzle and confound his fellow cabinetmakers, he undoubtedly did much to raise the level of his trade. Robert Adam intruded into a craft of which he knew very little, and obliged the joiner to radically modify his notions of construction, and even of materials, to resolve his creations into being. It is another

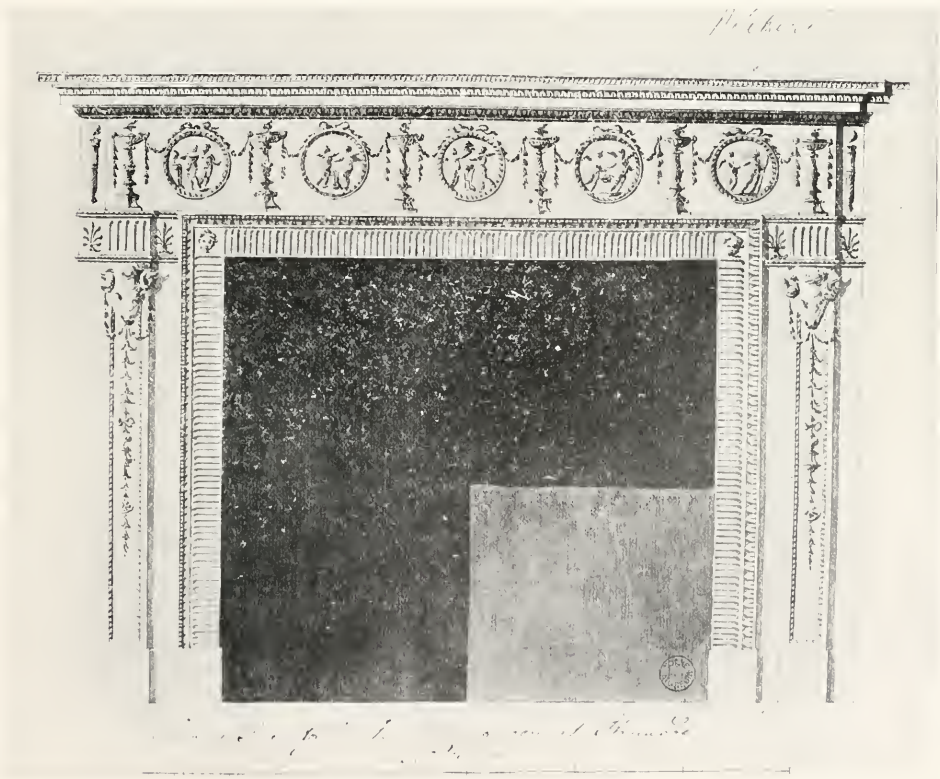

Fig. 54.

"*Chimney Piece for the 1st Drawing room at Harewood, 2nd Design.*" 1771.

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instance of the axiom that it is better to be well connected than to possess ability. Adam had the *entrée* of the drawing-room, while Chippendale was lucky to be allowed to wait in the antechamber.

Fig. 55 is an instance of this ornamental subterfuge—composition masquerading as sculpture, and applied on marble, in the central tablet. The whole design is characteristic of Adam's work between 1770 and 1775, after the usual process of rationalising by the marble-mason.

The attempt to approximately realise many of the ideas of Robert Adam, conceived without reference to the problem of their execution, resulted in several novel departures

Fig. 55.

MARBLE CHIMNEY-PIECE WITH COMPOSITION ENRICHMENT.

5 ft. 9½ ins. length of shelf. 4 ft. 10 ins. total height.

Date about 1775–80.

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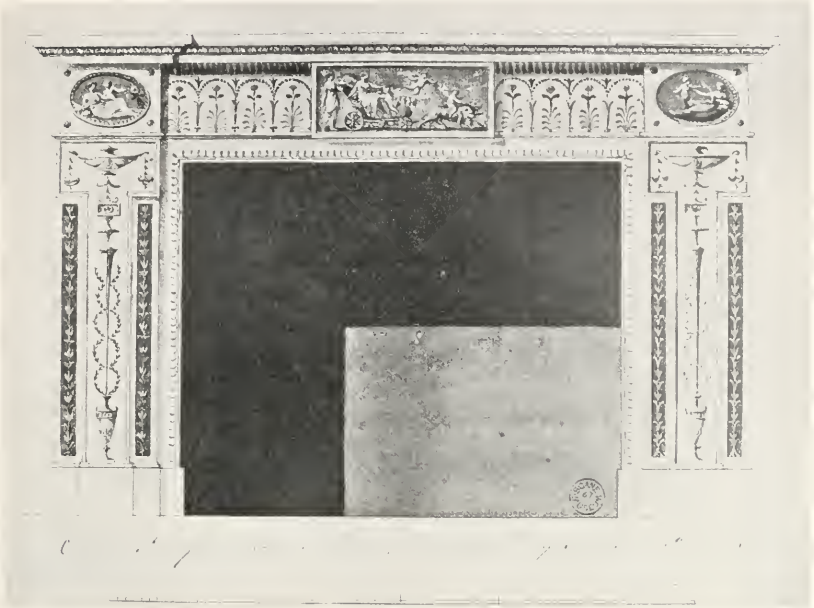

Fig. 56. *Adelphi*
"*Chimney Piece for the second Drawing room at Lady Home's in Portman Square.*" *1st Febr*. 1775

Fig. 57. *Adelphi*
"*Chimney Piece for the Great Drawing room at Bolton House.*" *31st July* 1777.

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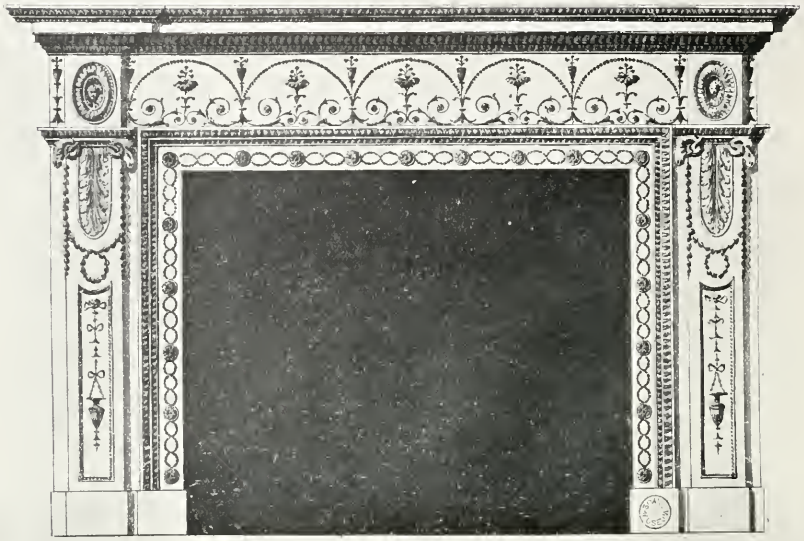

Fig. 58.
"2nd Design of a Chimney Piece for the Gallery at Harewood." *Adelphi 22nd June* 1776.

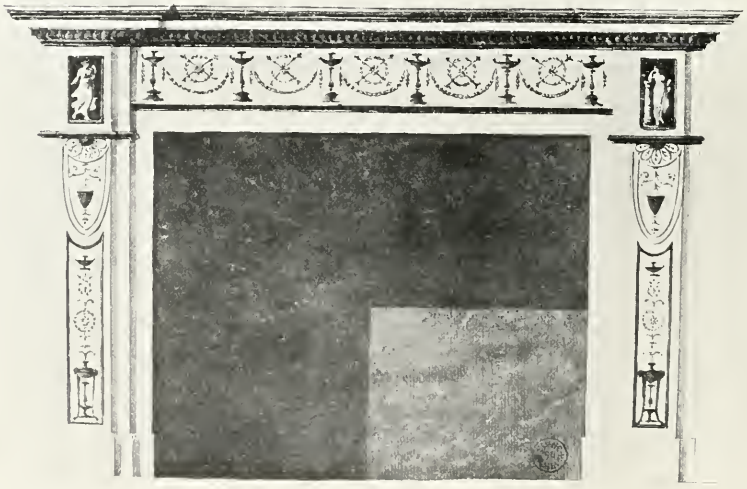

Fig. 59.
"Chimney Piece for the Old Library room at Kenwood House." (1777.) *Undated.*

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in the way of manufacture, especially in the case of the marble-worker. Adam's finished drawings were nearly always elaborately tinted, and he appears to have favoured bright colourings in painting or inlay. To realise these conceptions in marble it was necessary to inlay coloured compositions or pieces of variegated marble, and the art of the scagliola-worker was called in to aid that of the marble-mason. It is the usual penalty, in a book of this character, that one has to investigate every idle fable which has become interwoven with the history of a trade, and to demonstrate the unreliability of such. Failure to mention is usually credited to ignorance of a fact, and the original story is allowed to persist. With much of the marble work of the Adam period it was customary—especially with the statuary marbles—to chisel out the ground in definite patterns, and to fill up the grooves with coloured scagliola compositions, usually of gypsum, or pieces of tinted marble. This art was known in Italy many years before

Fig. 60.

CHIMNEY-PIECE OF WHITE MARBLE, INLAID WITH COLOURED COMPOSITION.

5 ft. 9 ins. length of shelf; 4 ft. 6 ins. total height; jambs, 9 ins. wide; frieze, 10 ins. deep; opening, 3 ft. 10½ ins. wide.

Date ——.

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the period of Adam, and the manufacture of this inlaid work has never been a secret in the higher branches of the trade of the marble-mason. A story is current, however, that this work was practised by an Italian of the name of Bossi—hence the name "Bossi-work," which is usually applied to this inlay in marble—and that the process was a secret known only to him. According to the story—which is highly circumstantial, as such fables usually are—this Bossi worked principally in Ireland, and, according to the account, he had a chamber assigned to him in the mansion of an Irish nobleman. His patron, however, emulating Bluebeard's wife, obtained access to this chamber, and attempted to penetrate the mysteries of the process, upon the discovery of which Bossi threw up his work and left for Italy in disgust. There are no dates attached to the story, which is highly improbable for several reasons. In the first place, it could not have been possible for a single man, working a secret process without assistance, to have accomplished a tithe of the work credited to him still preserved to the present day. Secondly, the manufacture would have stopped when Bossi returned to Italy, and would have become a lost art, which is emphatically not the case, as so-called "Bossi" mantel-pieces are produced at the present day. The writer has never known an

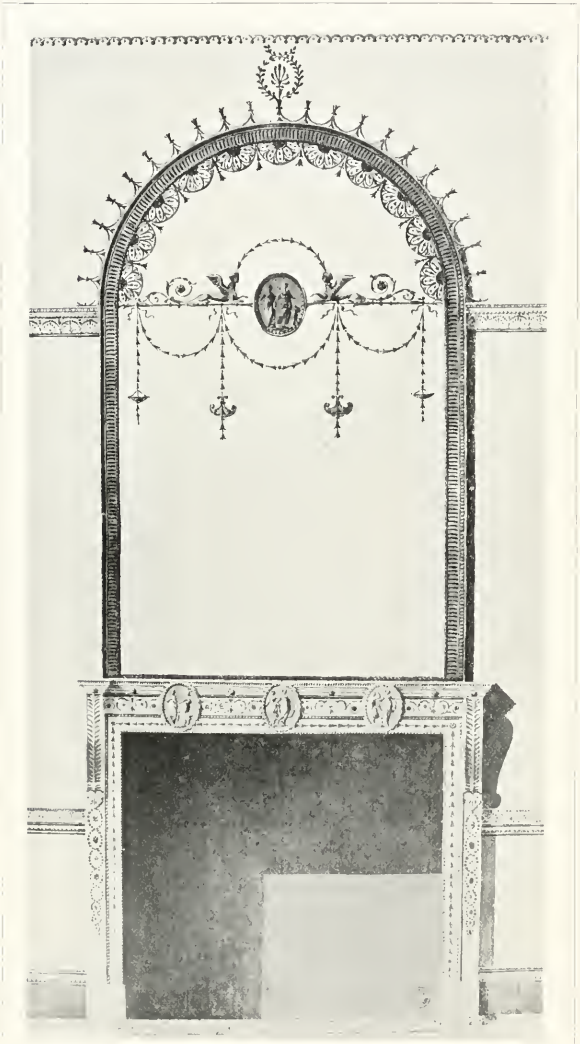

Fig. 61.
"Design of a Chimney Piece for the Dressing room at the Earl of Harrington's." Undated.

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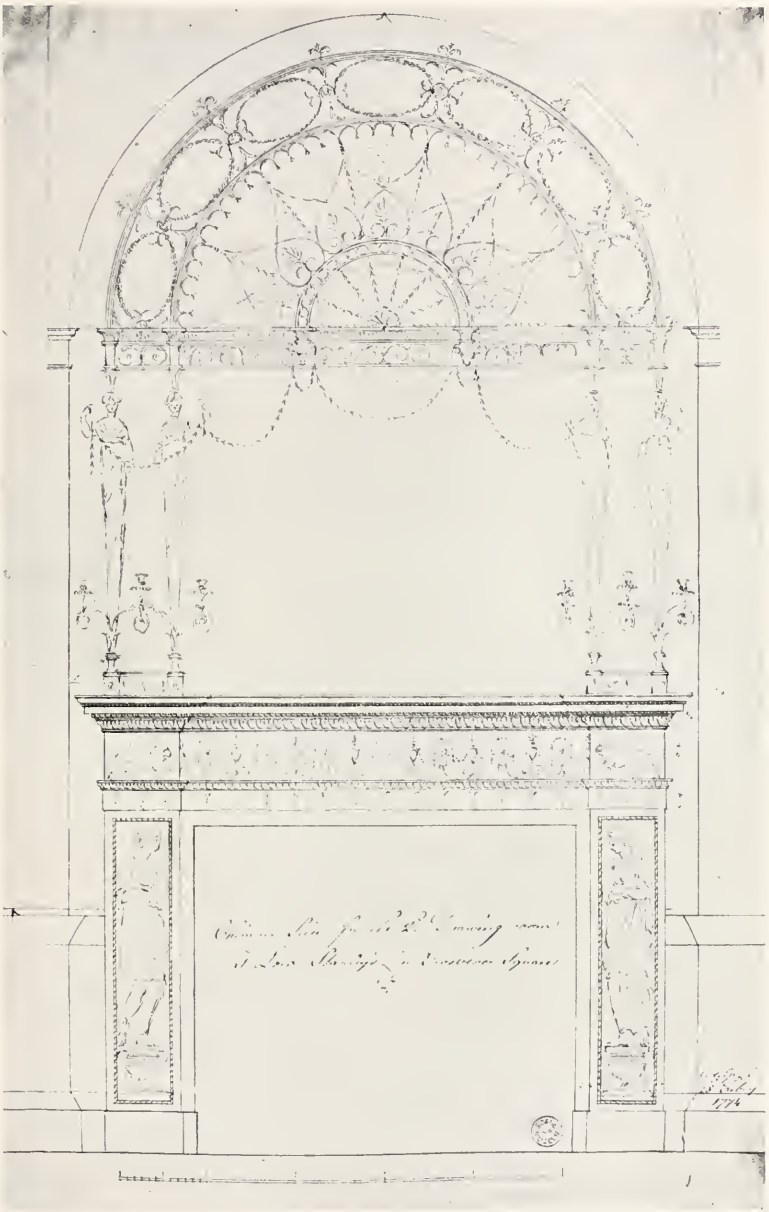

Fig. 62.

"*Chimney Piece for the 2nd Drawing room at Lord Stanley's in Grosvenor Square.*" *Adelphi 28 Febry.* 1774.

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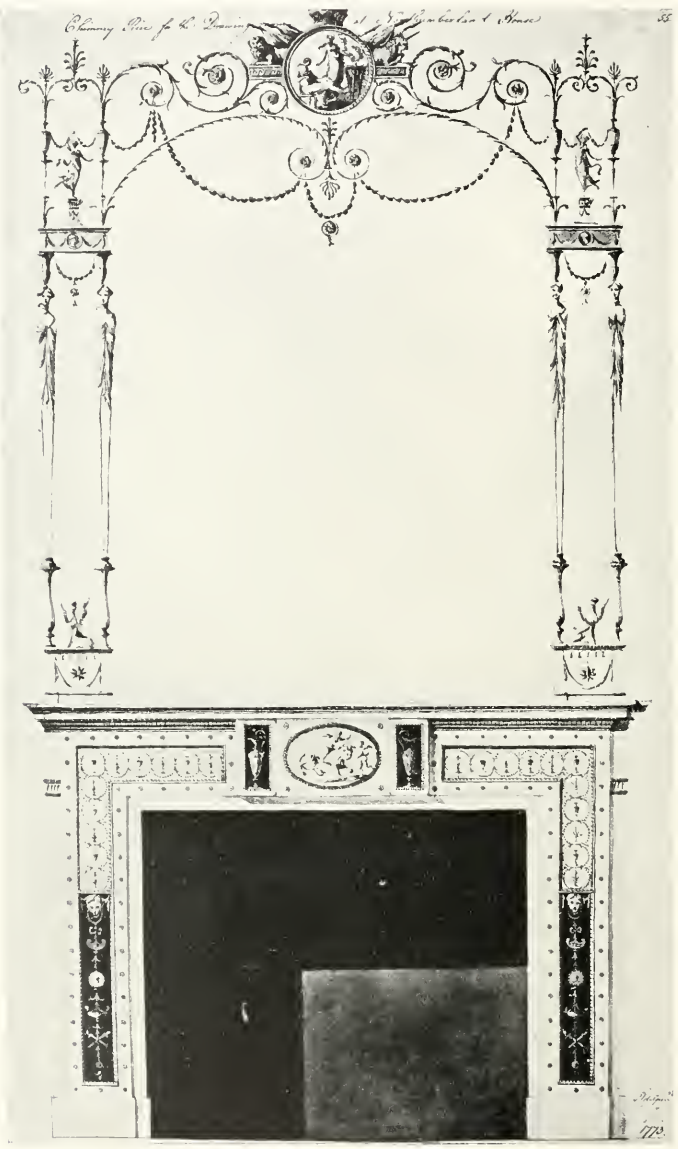

Fig 63. *Adelphi*

"Chimney Piece for the Drawing room at Northumberland House." 1773.

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instance of a desire for companion pieces to remain ungratified. If a collector possesses a chimney-piece of a particular design and requires another, and sends a photograph to a Dublin dealer, it is surprising how soon a fellow-piece appears, authentically attributed to this mysterious Italian. Last of all, this secret process, trumpeted forth by dealers, is no secret to a marble-mason of the old school, as this "Bossi-work" was in fair demand between 1865 and 1875, and was made at that period as a usual thing, regardless of secret processes.

Fig. 56, dated February 1, 1775, is an important piece, indicated as for "the second Drawing room at Lady Home's in Portman Square," and evidently designed for execution in inlaid marble, with the central tablet and the oval panels painted on the marble, probably in some species of fresco. Robert Adam was surrounded by several decorators of established repute, on whom he depended for the execution of such panels as on this chimney-piece. Among these artists may be mentioned Angelica Kauffmann, Zucchi (afterwards her husband, and the painter of much of the ceiling decoration at Nostell), Pergolesi (whose hand is evident in many of these original sketches), and Cipriani, the author of a book of *Ornaments* in the style of Adam. Richardson also probably

Fig. 64.
GILT MIRROR.
7 ft. 3½ ins. high × 3 ft. 2½ ins. wide.
Date about 1770.

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worked under his guidance for some time, but more as a designer than as a decorator.

Fig. 57 was designed for the "great Drawing room at Bolton House" on July 31, 1777. Here we have the same proposed inlay of coloured marbles in conjunction with fresco and carving. According to the scale, this chimney-piece measures 5 feet 10 inches to the top of the shelf, and 7 feet and 1 inch across the jambs, with an opening 4 feet 8 inches wide by 3 feet 10 inches high. Some idea of the enormous size of this chimney-piece may be gathered from these measurements.

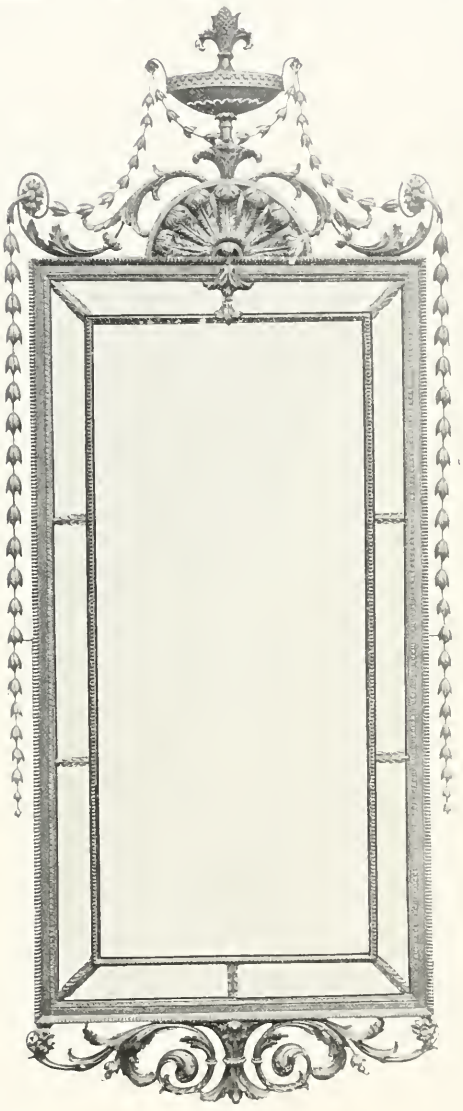

Fig 65.
GILT MIRROR.
7 ft. 8 ins. total height. 2 ft. 9½ ins. width outside frame.
Date about 1770.

Fig. 58 is marked as the "2nd Design of a Chimney Piece for the Gallery at Harewood," and is dated 1776, some two years after the name of the house was changed from that of Gawthorp. This piece strongly resembles a mantel in one of the saloons at Nostell, and it rivals the Bolton House chimney-piece in size, being 6 feet high from the floor to the top of the shelf. The design of the ornament is evidently intended for inlaid marble, with the familiar Adam rams' heads cresting the jambs and carrying the frieze moulding.

Fig. 59, a "Chimney Piece for the 1st Library room at Roxburghe House," is undated, but is probably of the same period as the Harewood example. This design is interesting as being the one usually selected by the maker of "Bossi" mantel-pieces, in which case the two painted panels at the top of the jambs are omitted.

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Fig. 60 is one of these white marble chimney-pieces, decorated with an inlay coloured gypsum and small pieces of variegated marble. The design is simple and appropriate, and characteristic of the work of Adam at this period, although the actual date of the mantel is probably considerably later than the ornamentation would suggest.

Fig. 61 is an early design for a "Chimney Piece for the Dressing room at the Earl of Harrington's" (Ashburnham House), and shows Robert Adam's treatment for the pier glasses which usually surmounted his chimney-pieces. It will be at once apparent that carton pierre, strengthened with a coring of wire, is the only possible medium in which to realise such a design as this. Robert Adam made some extensive alterations at Ashburnham House, if he did not actually rebuild it. The gateway and lodge entrance were certainly his, erected in 1773, and the general character of this sketch indicates radical modification of the interior. Ashburnham House was demolished in 1897 to make way for the huge flats fronting on Dover Street and occupying the whole side of Hay Hill.

Fig. 66.

GILT MIRROR WITH COMPOSITION ENRICHMENTS.

(One of a pair.)

7 ft. 9 ins. high × 4 ft. 0 in. wide.

Date about 1780.

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The "Chimney Piece for the 2nd Drawing room at Lord Stanley's in Grosvenor Square" (Fig. 62) is dated February 28, 1774. The pier glass furnishes another instance of Adam's want of constructional knowledge and the sacrifice of necessary strength to excessive delicacy. Instead of the framing containing the mirror, the glass must have been relied upon to support the ornamentation. These elaborate pier glasses were constructed in the reverse of the usual fashion. The backboard was first framed up, upon which the glass was placed and secured by a flat rebated fillet. The ornament, whether of wood or composition, or of both, was then affixed to the framing and the glass with an adhesive, the glass being also drilled in places where the overlying decoration required additional support. Although nominally movable, these huge pier glasses were practically fixtures, as the risk of breakage, whether of the ornament

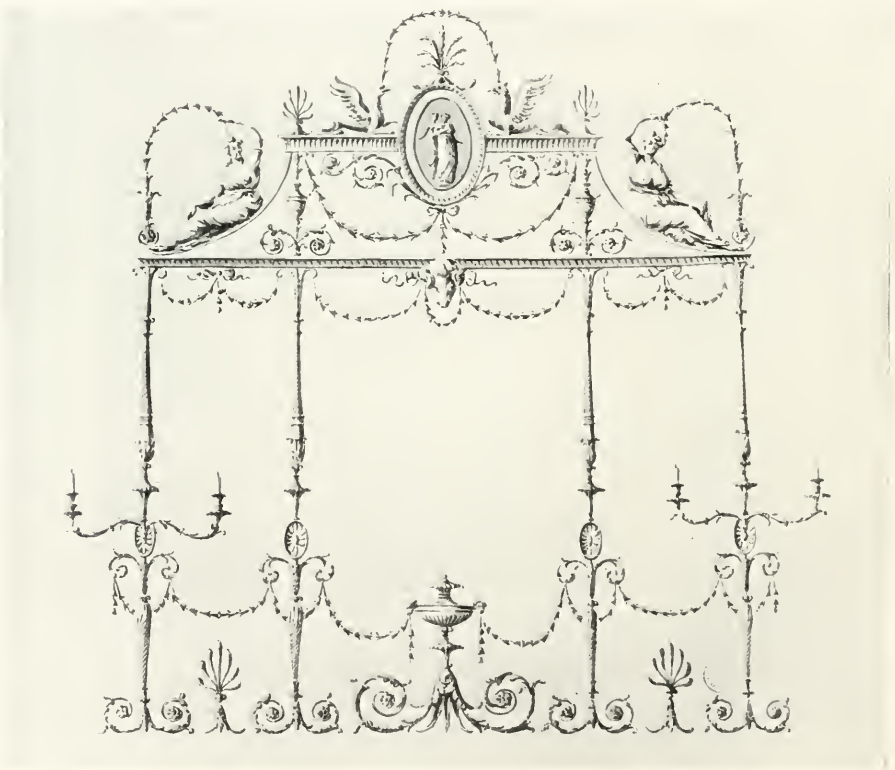

Fig. 67.

"Chimney Glass in front Drawing room at Robert Child, Esqre., in Berkeley Square." 1771.

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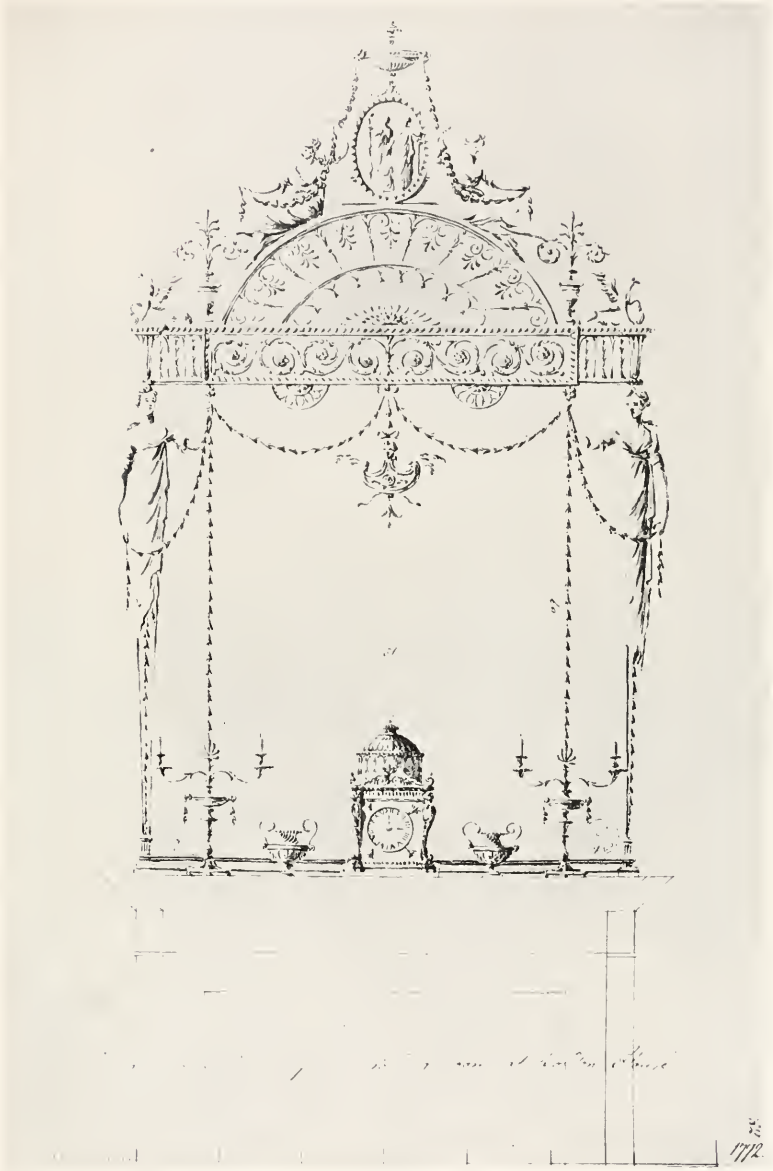

Fig. 68.

"Glass frame over Chimney in Drawing room at Bolton House." 1772

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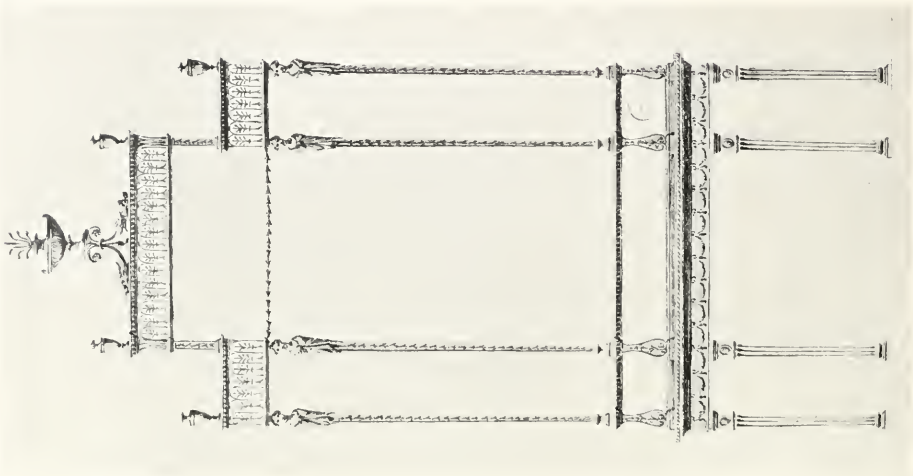

Fig. 70.
"*Glass and Table frame for the Piers in the Eating room at Wormleybury.*" 28*th March* 1778.
(Sir Abraham Hume.)

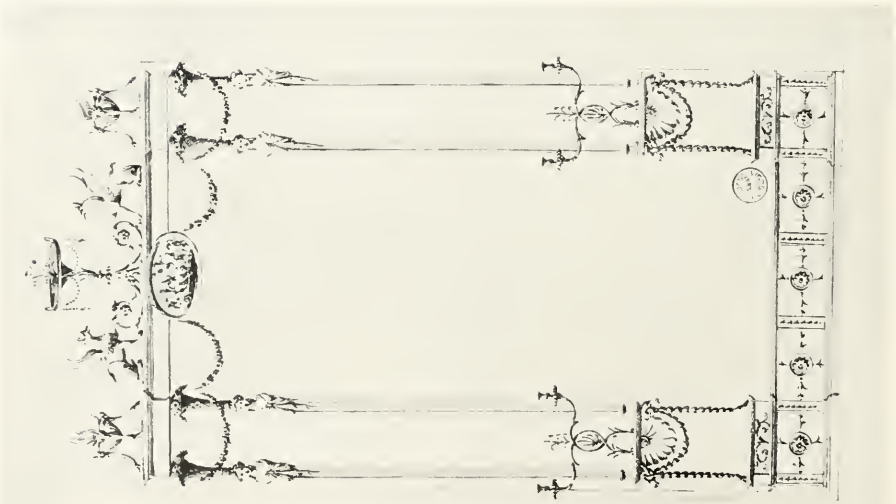

Fig. 69.
"*Design of a Glass frame for John Kenrick, Esq.*" 1783.

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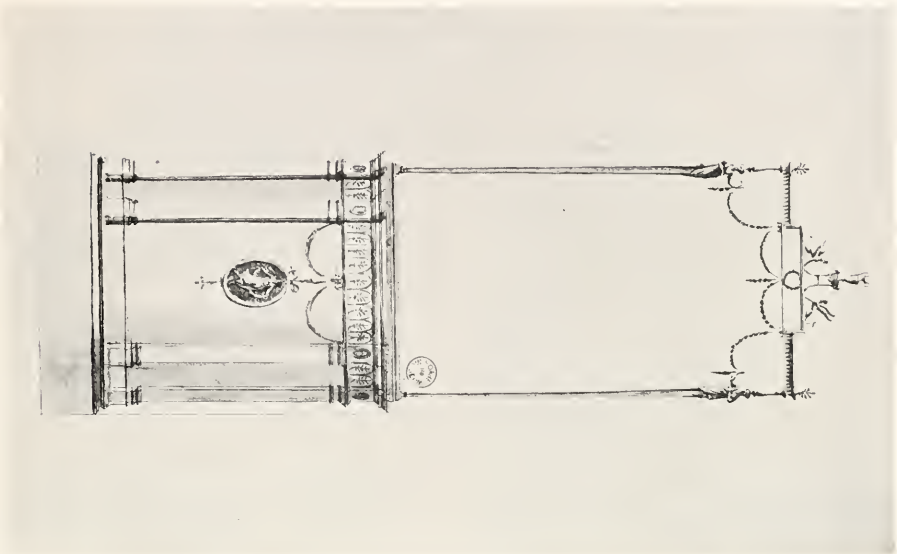

Fig. 71.

"Glass and Commode for George Keate, Esq." 1778.

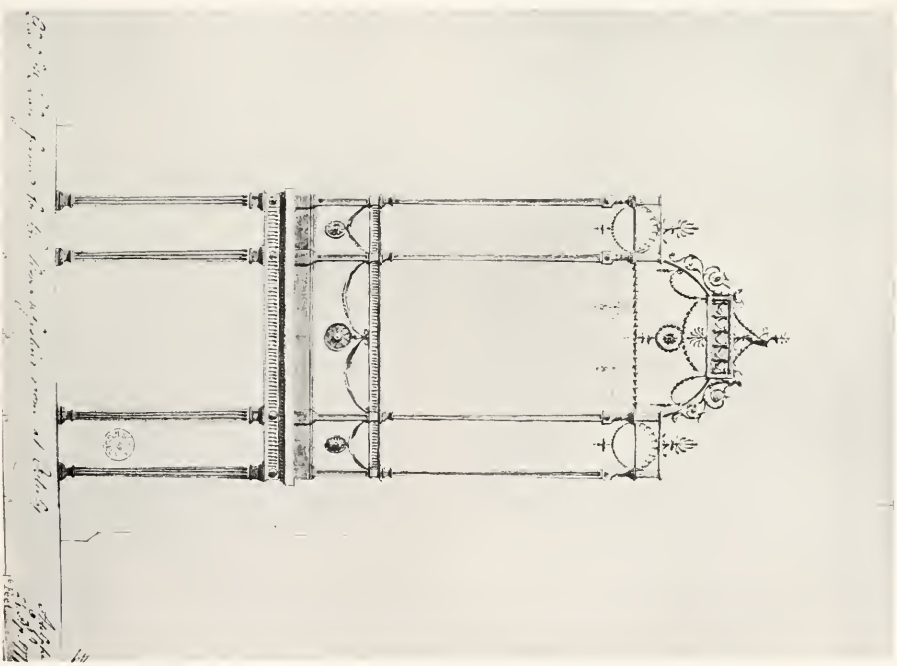

Fig. 72.

"Glass & Table frame for the Breakfasting room at Osterley." Adelphi 24th Apl. 1777.

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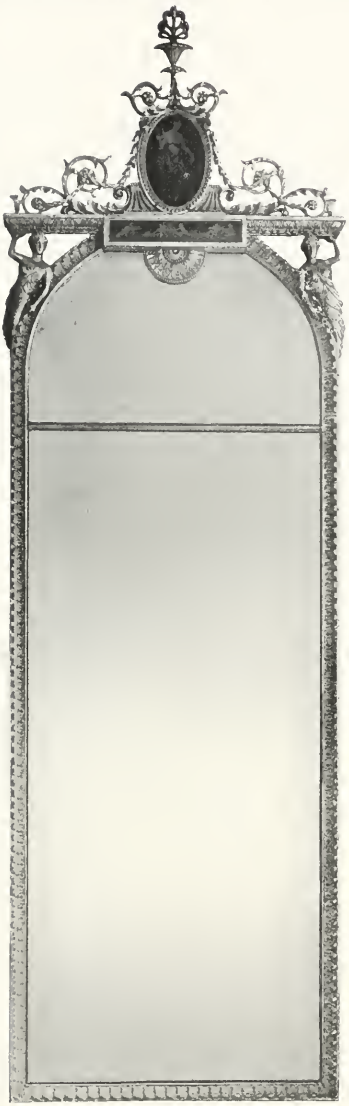

Fig. 73.
GILT AND PAINTED MIRROR.
(One of a pair.)
In the possession of Messrs. Gill and Reigate.
10 ft. 1 in. high × 3 ft. 2¼ ins. wide.
Date about 1775-80.

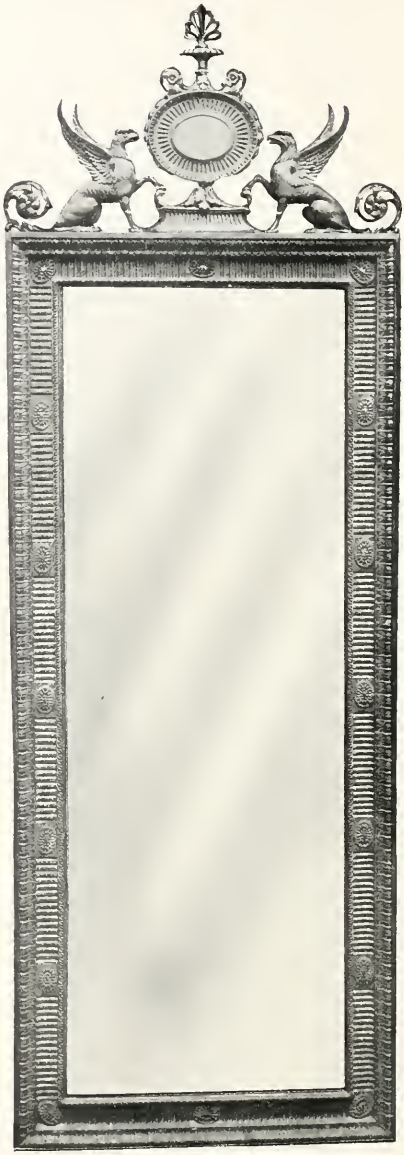

Fig. 74.
CARVED AND GILT MIRROR.
(One of a pair.)
8 ft. 1 in. high × 2 ft. 8½ ins. wide.
Date about 1775.

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or the glass, was too great to permit of their removal without extraordinary precautions. The size of the sheets of glass used in these frames is in itself an indication that they could only have been made for the very wealthy, that, for example, in Fig. 62 measuring 6 feet 2 inches in width by 3 feet 7 inches to the transom—which would have to be in the one piece—representing, at this date, an outlay of nearly £600 of our present-day money, according to the prices of glass during the latter half of the eighteenth century. Chippendale, who appears to have first introduced the method of fixing to a backboard previously described, was also careful to design his mirrors so that the field of the glass could be broken up into several pieces with the decoration concealing the joints.

That these high prices were demanded and paid for silvered glass at this period is demonstrated by the evidence of the original invoices still preserved at Nostell Priory and Harewood House, where Chippendale worked under the superintendence of Robert Adam. Thus in the account for 1773–5 of "Edwin Lascelles, Esq., to Chippendale, Haig, and Co., Dr.," "A very large pier Glass" is invoiced at £290—equivalent to about £770 of our currency in its present purchasing value—and the frame is charged separately at £70 as "A superb Frame to do., with very large Antique ornament exceeding richly Carved and highly finished in burnished Gold." This refers more probably to an Adam design rather than to one of Chippendale's own, hence the reference to "Antique ornaments."

Another looking-glass, 91 inches by 51½ inches, is charged in the same account at £160, and the frame is separately referred to as "A very large Elegant Frame to do. with Antique Ornaments exceeding richly Carved

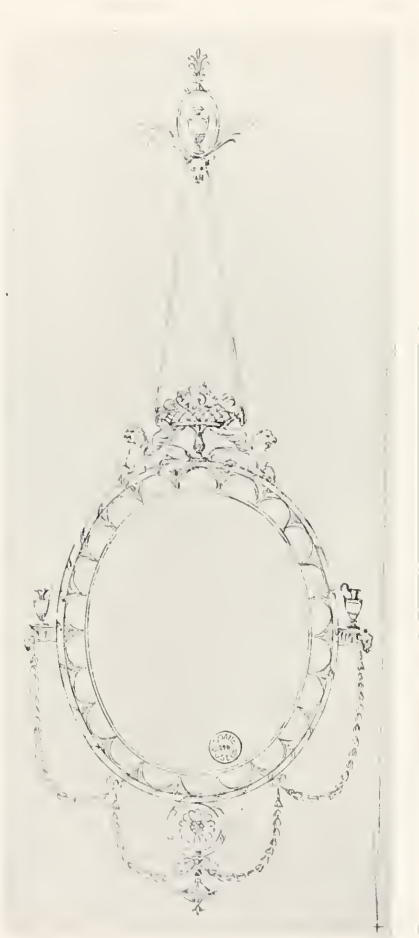

Fig. 75.
"Design of a Girandol for Sir Lawrence Dundas."
1765.

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and highly finished in burnished Silver with a large Headplate and broad Looking Glass borders with 2 paintings of do. &c. Compleat. £75."

Fig. 76
GILT MIRROR.
In the possession of Messrs. Colling and Young.
3 ft. 8½ ins. total height.
1 ft. 5 ins. wide outside frame.
Date about 1750.

This description would fit many of the examples previously illustrated—Fig. 68, for example. Possibly the actual sketch is still in the Soane Museum, but it is difficult to determine. The reference, however, is obviously to an Adam design.

Fig. 63 is a chimney-piece and glass frame designed for the drawing-room at Northumberland House in 1773. After 1770 the collaboration of James Adam is implied by the signature "Adelphi" (brothers) on these sketches. He was, no doubt, exceedingly useful to his brother, whose Parliamentary duties after his election as member for Kinross in 1768 must have interfered to some extent with his practice. There are evidences of more than the one hand in these sketches, not so much in the drawing or detailing—as the "Adam style" was very much stereotyped after 1770—as in the practical application of the design itself. Thus, a comparison of this Northumberland House pier frame with that of the Stanley example previously illustrated, is instructive. The latter is quite possible with the aid of wired composition, but the ornament of the former demands fixing to the wall. It is almost impossible to trace where the

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Fig. 77.
GILT MIRROR.
3 ft. 1 in. total height.
1 ft. 4 ins. wide.
Date about 1775.

Fig. 78.
GILT MIRROR.
4 ft. 10 ins. total height.
2 ft. 4 ins. extreme width.
Date about 1775.

Fig. 79.
GILT MIRROR.
2 ft. 10½ ins. total height.
1 ft. 8 ins. extreme width.
Date about 1770.

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glass begins or ends at the top, as there is not sufficient housing for a quarter-inch plate in the utterly inadequate scrolling on either side of the central device. As it is drawn here, this frame is barely possible in metal; it is out of the question if wood or composition be substituted. Whether it was actually made in this or another form it is not possible to say. The drawing itself does not look like a tentative sketch, but this is not a safe criterion with the painstaking work of Adam. Northumberland House was demolished in 1874 to make way for the thoroughfare to the Embankment, known as Northumberland Avenue. The constructional materials were sold by auction, among which were nearly all the pieces designed by Adam, with the exception of such as could be easily removed, which were distributed among the Duke's other houses—Sion, Alnwick, and Grosvenor Place. Adam was engaged in decorating the interior of Northumberland House for some years, and in the drawing-room, for which this chimney-piece and glass were designed, the decorative medallions were painted by Angelica Kauffmann.

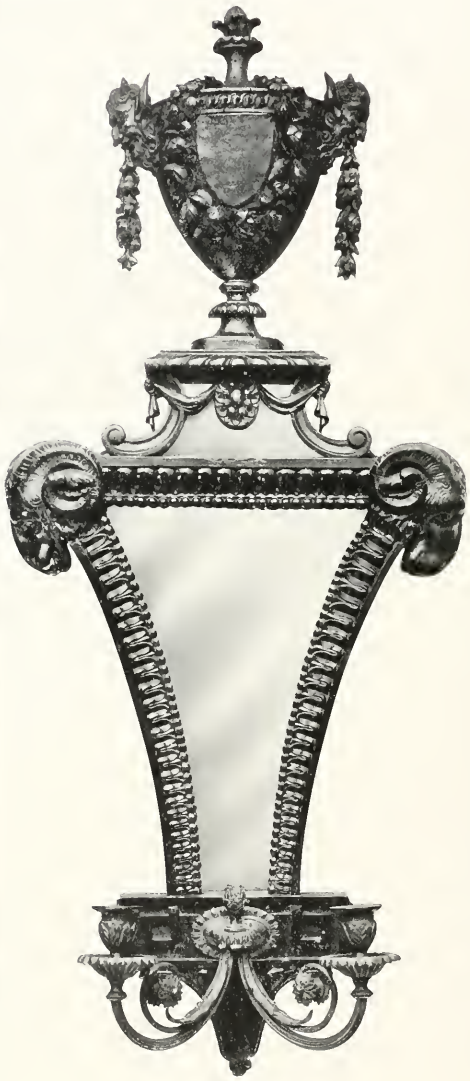

Fig. 80.
MAHOGANY MIRROR.
In the possession of Messrs. Colling and Young.
3 ft. 4 ins. high × 1 ft. 6 ins. wide.
Date about 1770.

The fashionable vogue of Adam's style caused a number of imitators to arise, many of whom, in the manner of the period, endeavoured to achieve renown by the publication of books of design. Of these, Carter, Richardson, Cipriani, and the younger Chippendale are perhaps the best known. Numbers of the classical mirrors then in favour

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were produced, which, curiously enough, differ only from the work of Robert Adam in being practical in character—an advantage purchased at the sacrifice of the impossible delicacy of Adam's designs. Fig. 64 is a good type of the earlier kind, where the Georgian traditions are still discernible. There is here nothing impossible for execution in carved wood, but composition is a logical necessity for the next example. These mirrors were intended to be fixed to the wall, above the usual commodes or pier tables of the period. Fig. 66 is a mantel glass, one of a pair, evidently intended for a vast apartment fitted with two fireplaces. The design is simple, but exceedingly effective. The central ornament on the top is impossible without the aid of wired composition.

Robert Adam designed a considerable amount of furniture for the London mansion of Robert Child the banker, and at Isleworth he built Osterley Park for his patron, the only Adam house built on the open peristyle plan. The sketch, Fig. 67, is dated 1771, and is therefore an early example. It scales 7 feet 4 inches in height by 7 feet in total width. Some idea of the cost of large sheets of glass is suggested by the attempt to split up the plate into five pieces, and with the addition of a base to hold the scrolled ornament at the bottom, there is nothing very impractical in the design.

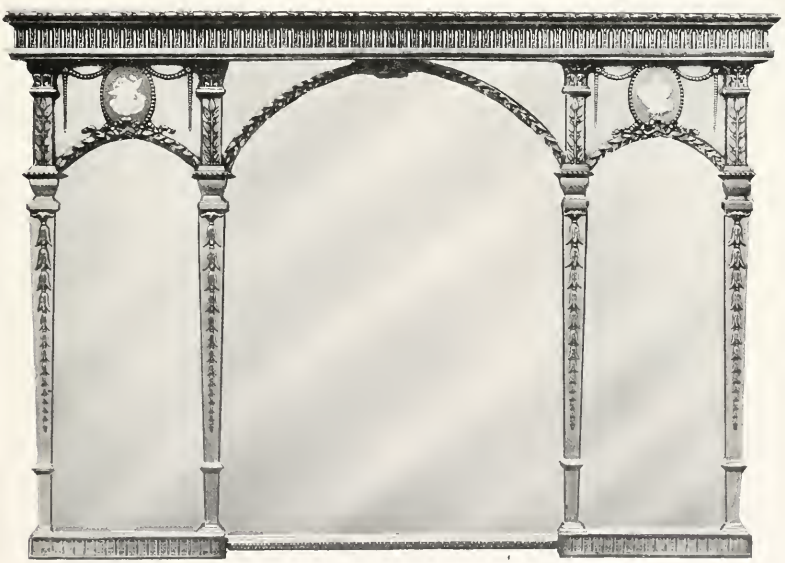

Fig. 81.

GILT MIRROR.

5 ft. 1 in. wide × 3 ft. 9 ins. high.

Date ——

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Fig. 82.

GILT MIRROR. (One of a pair.)

In the possession of Messrs. Gill and Reigate.

4 ft. 4 ins. high. × 1 ft. 3 ins. outside diameter of frame.

Date about 1775.

Fig. 83.

GILT AND PAINTED GIRANDOLE.

4 ft. 1 in. high · 1 ft. 3½ ins. extreme width.

Date about 1775.

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Fig. 68 is a design for an enormous glass for Bolton House, 10 feet 3 inches in height, and is dated 1772. The sketch lacks the usual precision of the Adelphi work. The panels of glass are figured with their sizes, some indication that the design was made up as it is drawn here. In these vast apartments it must have been difficult to keep the furniture to a suitable scale to accord, without detracting from its use value. Thus, the clock shown here scales 23 inches in height, and yet appears small in the sketch in comparison with the glass. To complete the absurdity, it is shown with a 6-inch dial.

In Fig. 69 the method of building up these pier glasses on a back framing, before referred to, is clearly suggested. This design dates from 1777, and is in the mature style of Adam. Fig. 70 is a year later, March 28, 1778, and shows one of these tall glasses surmounting a pier table. It is obvious that a lesson had been learned at this late date, from the frequent modifications necessitated by the resolving of the earlier and more fanciful designs into actual being, and in this design there is nothing imprac-

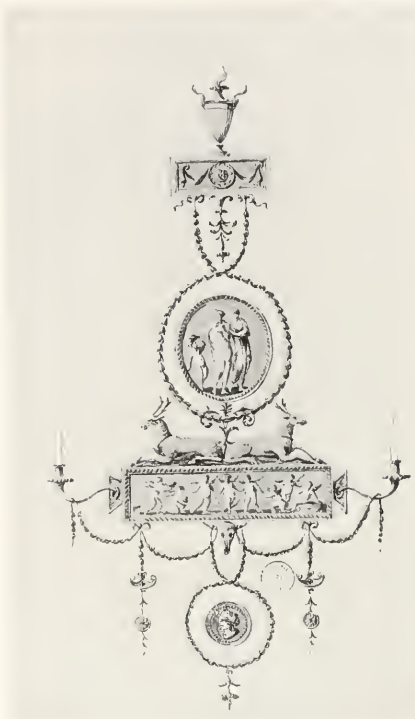

Fig. 84.
"*Girandol for Lady Bathurst's Dressing Room.*" *Adelphi.* 31*st January* 1778.
8 ft. 1 in. high × 4 ft. 6 ins. wide over all.

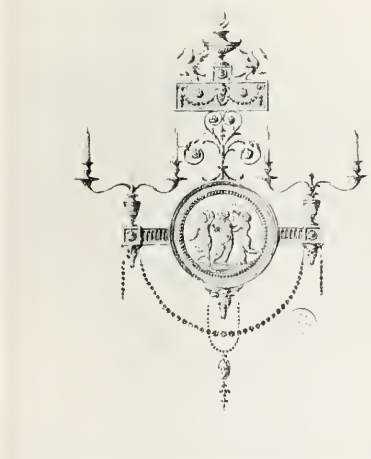

Fig. 85.
"*Girandole for Lord Cassillis's Eating Room.*" 1782.
4 ft. 6 ins. high × 3 ft. 3 ins. wide over all.

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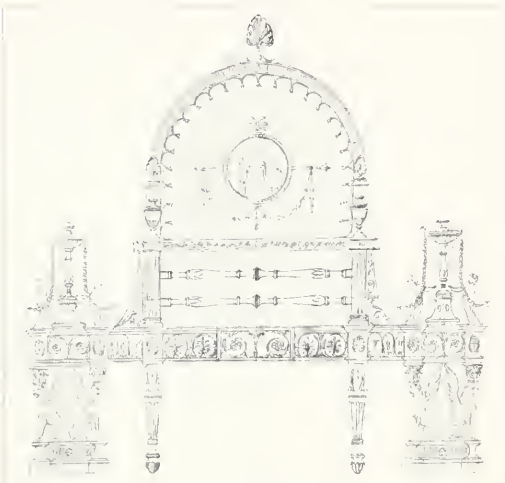

Fig. 86.

"Grate for Robert Child, Esq." Adelphi. 22nd April 1773.

ticable for execution in wood or composition. Fig. 71 is a glass fixed above a small semicircular commode, probably of japanned wood with a central painted medallion. It is indicated as for "George Keate, Esq.," and dated 1778. Fig. 72 is a "Glass and Table-frame"—*i.e.*, a pier table supported on the surbase moulding behind—"for the Breakfasting-room at Osterley," and is signed and dated, "Adelphi, 24th April 1777." The suspended medallions on the lower panels of the glass are rather unfortunate features, and the design was never executed in this form. Some suggested additions are shown, pencilled on the sketch.

Fig. 73 is one of a pair of large gilt mirrors made to be fixed above the marble-top pier tables of this period. In the cresting, the long rectangular panel is painted in grisaille, the oval medallion above being in colours. The scrolled ornament is in wired composition. The design is typical of Adam's best period, from 1775 to 1780.

Fig. 74 is of more formal type, and, although of the school of Adam, the general proportions are more bulky than is usual with his work. The oval panel at the top is inset with a plaque of Wedgwood's ware, and crested with a similar honeysuckle ornament to that on Fig. 73. The flanking winged griffins show a characteristic Adam detail.

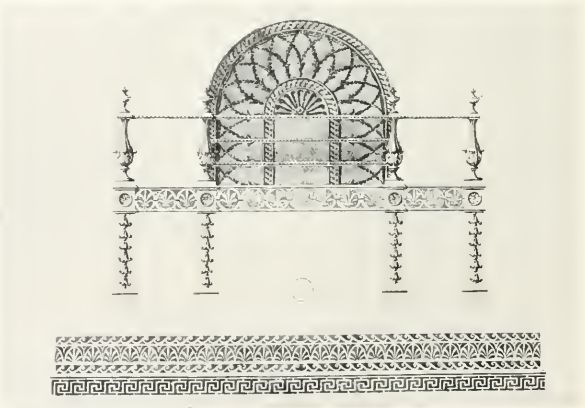

Fig. 87.

"Design for a Grate and Fender for the Right Honble. The Earl of Coventry."

"Robert Adam, Architect. 1765."

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The ornament here also is of composition cored with wire, prepared and gilded.

Robert Adam's oval hanging mirrors are among his happiest compositions. Fig. 75 is merely a rough suggestion, made for Sir Lawrence Dundas, afterwards Marquis of Zetland, in 1765. It is given to show that Adam even went so far as to design special wall-hooks from which

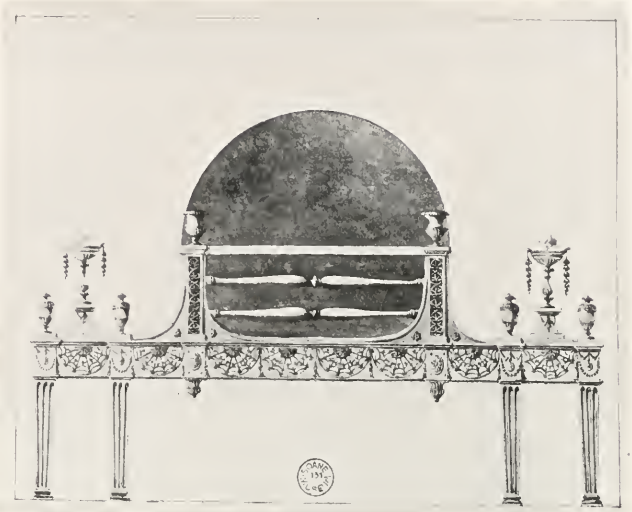

Fig. 88.
"Design of a Grate for Sir Abraham Hume, Baronet." 23rd Oct. 1779.

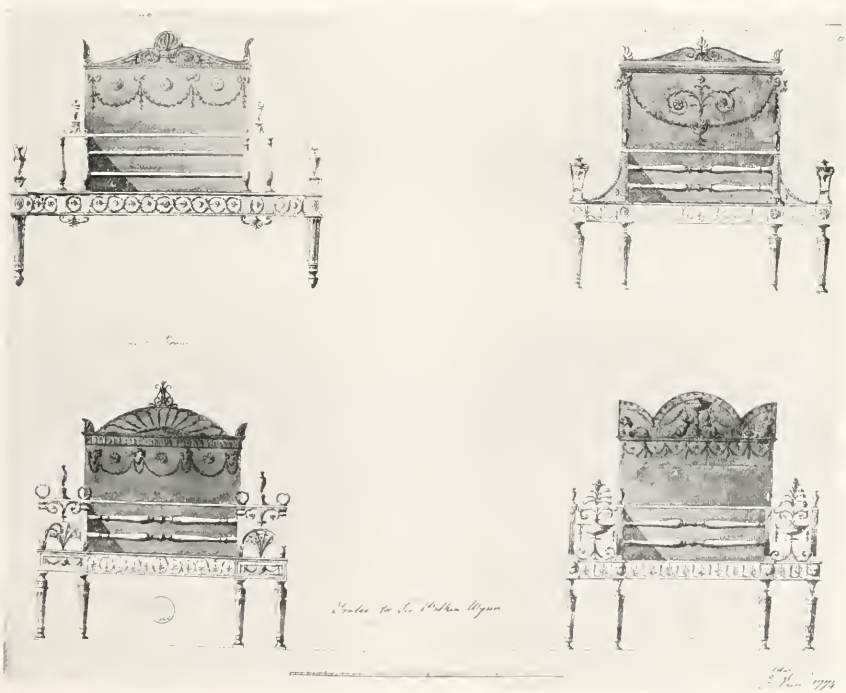

Fig. 89. *"Grates for Sir Watkin Wynn."* Fig. 90.
Fig. 91. *Adelphi, 25th March 1774.* Fig. 92.

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to suspend these mirrors. Fig. 76 is an actual example, of fine design and beautiful workmanship. The pendant and foliated ornamentation is, of course, in composition, carved wood being impossible with such delicacy of treatment. The conventionalised rendering of the fronded honeysuckle on the top and the curl of the vase below are remarkable instances of vigorous designing. The treatment of tied drapery is unusual with the work of Adam himself, who appeared to be loth to sacrifice any of the delicacy of his details to obtain such devices. With Carter, Wallis, Richardson, and Pergolesi considerable and effective use was made of swags of drapery.

Three oval mirror frames of wood enriched with composition ornament prepared and gilded are shown in Figs. 77, 78, and 79. In the first, considerable use is made of the usual Adam honeysuckle *motif*, and the small rectangular panel is painted in grisaille, in the manner of Cipriani. Fig. 78 is more ornate, the oval surrounded by a mass of scrolled ornament of wired composition. Fig. 79 is the most rational and simple of the three. Mirrors of this type were usually hung between windows, and were frequently fitted with candelabra. Fig. 80 is one of this kind, unusual in being carved from mahogany. Pieces of this description are often erroneously described as girandoles, even by Adam himself. In Fig. 80 the mirror is framed in a pearled and fluted moulding, with two candle-branches springing from an oval patera, capped by a carved pine cone. Above, on the corners, are two horned rams' heads beautifully carved, which flank another small glass panel decorated with an oval patera and swags of drapery. Above the gadroon-carved capping-moulding is a semi-vase in the form of a cinerary urn, carved with vigorous satyr heads on the corners, from the mouths of which depend a string of flowers and leaves, which are also festooned round the central shield.

Fig. 81 is one of the smaller mirrors made for unimportant apartments. The design is simple and refined, effective use being made of the two Wedgwood plaques above the side panels. This glass originally possessed some scrolled ornament above the fluted capping-moulding, but this has been broken away, and has now been removed entirely and made good. The marks of the piercing for the composition wires are still visible, however.

It is rare to find convex mirrors in the Adam manner, and Fig. 82 is an exceptional specimen in every way. The rectangular panels above and below are painted in grisaille with figures of cherubs. The ornament is sharply modelled, thickly prepared, and gilt.

Robert Adam made effective use of elaborate wall candelabrum, which he describes as girandoles. The term is used in an erroneous sense, as the derivation of the word

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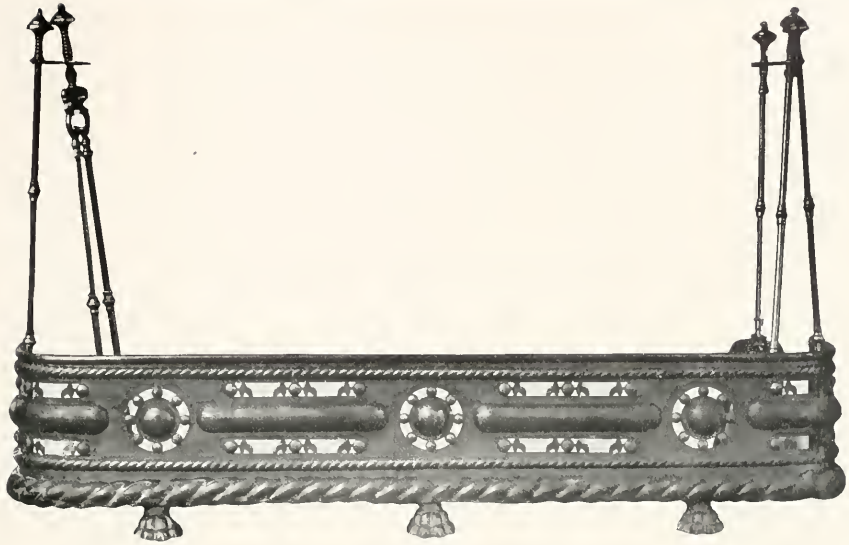

Fig. 93.

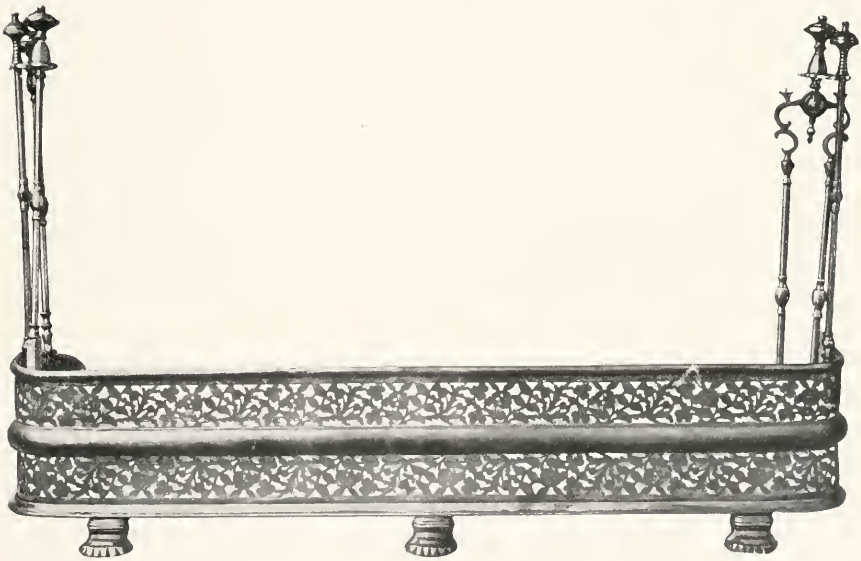

Fig. 94.

BRASS FENDERS OF THE LATER EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

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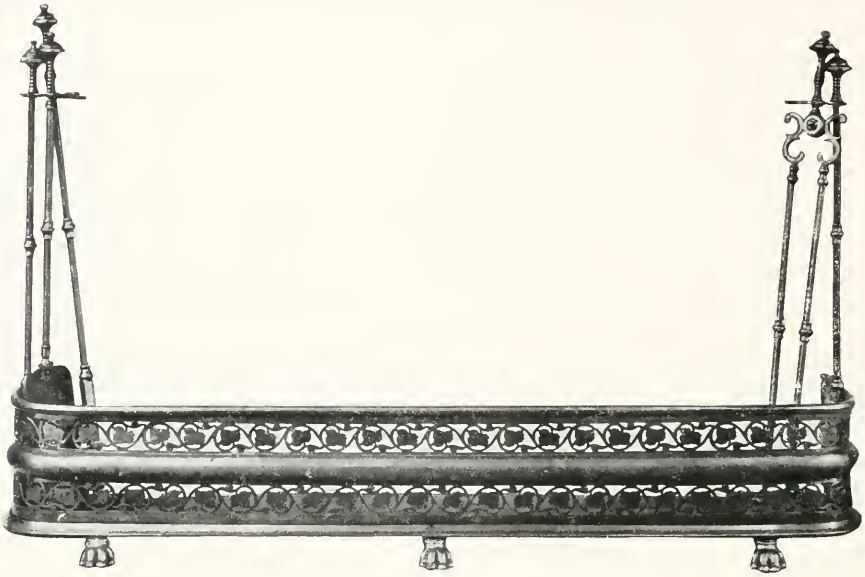

Fig. 95.

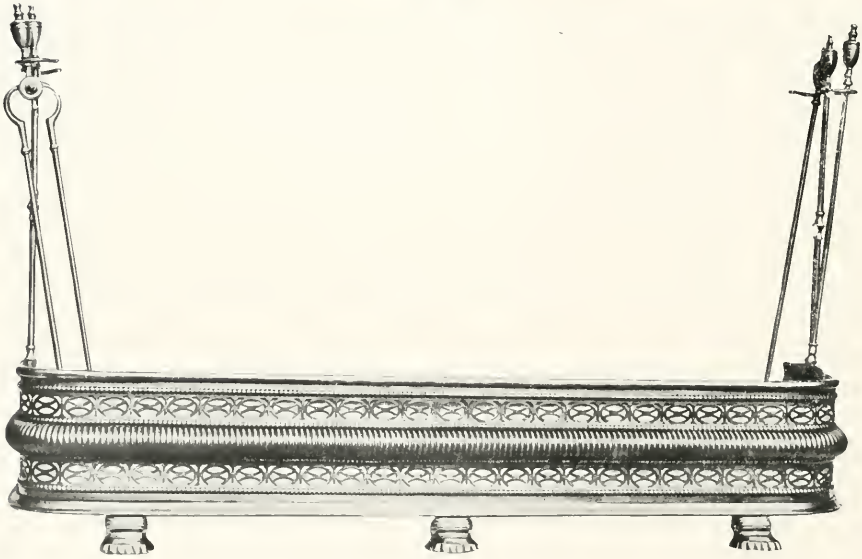

Fig. 96.

BRASS FENDERS OF THE LATER EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

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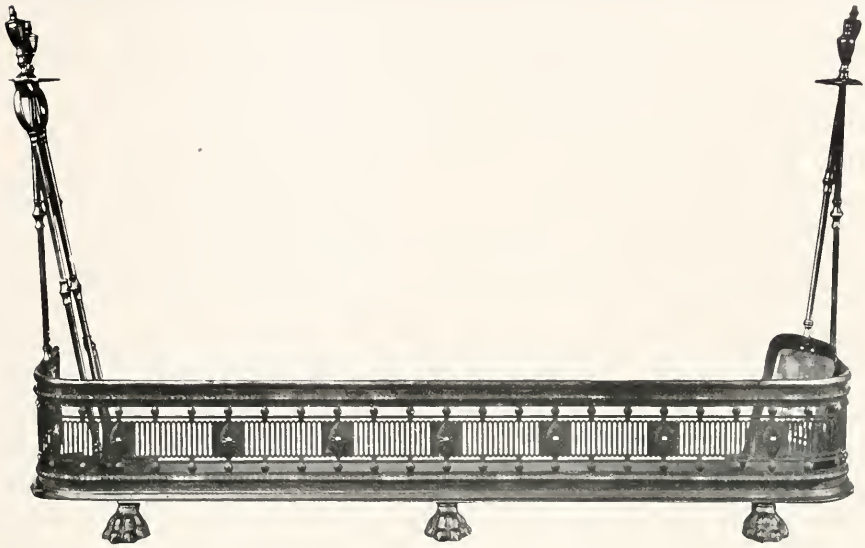

Fig. 97.

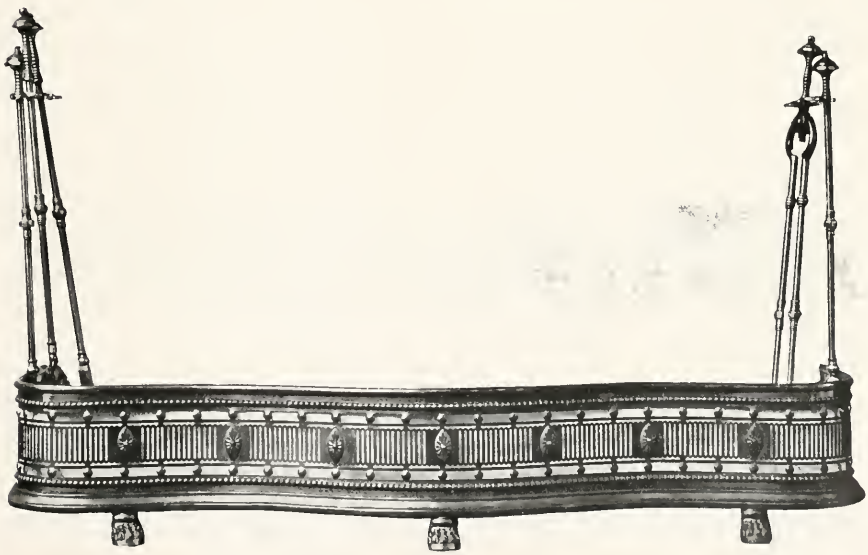

Fig. 98.

BRASS FENDERS OF THE LATER EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

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implies something made to turn, and it is impossible to consider these wall-lights being made to revolve. The only drawback to the term "wall-light" is that, should the candle-branches be removed, as in Fig. 83, it is difficult to find an applicable term at all. Adam's term of girandole, although inaccurate, may be found convenient, therefore, and can be adopted.

Fig. 83 is moulded with wired composition, and is painted a very pale green. The oval panel is ornamented with a modelled figure of a winged cherub, painted white on a sage-green ground, in obvious imitation of Wedgwood's ware. Figs. 84 and 85 give two original designs of Adam for these girandoles, the first signed "Adelphi" and dated January 31, 1778, and indicated as for "Lady Bathurst's Dressing-room." The Earl Bathurst had only been created some six years before the date of this design. He is chiefly known as the builder of Apsley House, which was erected from the designs of Robert and James Adam during the years from 1771 to 1778. There is a story, however, that Lord Bathurst was his own architect, and found, when the building was nearly completed, that he had omitted to provide a staircase. The mansion was radically altered, however, in 1828, under the direction of Sir Jeffrey Wyatville, for the Duke of Wellington, and very little of the Adam work remains in the interior and none outside.

Fig. 85 is indicated as for "Lord Cassillis's Eating-Room," and is dated 1782. The Earl of Cassillis (afterwards Marquis of Ailsa) was a countryman of Robert Adam, and this design was probably made for one of his Ayrshire seats, Cassillis or Culzean Castle.

The "Adelphi" appear to have taken the greatest pains in the general appoint-

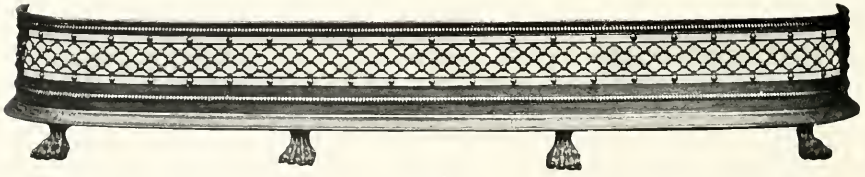

Fig. 99.

Fig. 100.

BRASS FENDERS OF THE LATER EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

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ments of the rooms which they designed. Fabrics, carpets, curtains and valances, the embroidery of silks for chairs, and even grates and fenders, were all carefully designed to carry out their schemes in the same style throughout. Fig. 86 shows one of the Osterley grates, the sketch dated April 22, 1773, and carefully drawn in full detail. The incongruity of the design is that the length of the bars is only 1 foot 7 inches, whereas the entire width is over 4 feet, a somewhat unnecessary waste of space merely for ornamental purposes.

Fig. 87 is the design of a grate and fender for the Earl of Coventry, and is signed "Robert Adam, Architect," and dated 1765. Although an early example, the designs are simple and effective. Adam was probably the originator of the well-known type of brass pierced fender, which is so usually described vaguely as "Georgian."

Fig. 88 is a grate designed for Sir Abraham Hume in October 1779. It will be noticed that Adam made no difference in his designing whether his materials were wood, composition, or metal. The side vases with their pendant husks are exactly the same as in his pier-glasses, and the fact that the one is in steel and the other a mixture of whiting, resin, and glue does not seem to have weighed very much with Robert Adam. Apart from these trifling omissions, however, there is a severity and chaste refinement with nearly all the designs of Adam, which probably accounted for their popularity among the wealthy. One can forgive his faults as a designer, as he is never vulgar. The same cannot be said of much of the work of Chippendale.

Figs. 89, 90, 91, and 92 are four designs of grates made for Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn's house, 18 St. James' Square, in 1774. There is no attempt at repetition, even in the case of two adjoining drawing-rooms, where the same pattern might have been esteemed an advantage.

In the same way as the furniture designs of Robert Adam were considerably modified by the cabinetmaker, so were his sketches of grates accepted in a general sense only. Considering how much wearisome iteration is evident in his designs—the same motives being repeated over and over again—it is surprising how great his influence has been, and still is, on the trades of the makers of grates and fenders. The educational value of this influence has been too frequently underrated, as, although it is easy to adopt Adam details, their use, in combination with the Adam proportions, is by no means an acquirement possessed by every designer. His style has been travestied; an ornamentation of swags or medallions is even now forthwith dubbed as being in the "Adams" style. Chippendale, Hepplewhite, and Sheraton suffered in an equal degree; it appears to have been the penalty which all the eighteenth century designers paid to posterity. It would have been remarkable had Robert Adam escaped. If his style was sometimes travestied, it was, as a compensation, frequently refined. The pierced

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brass fenders and fire implements which were so fashionable from 1760 down to the present day nearly all exhibit the designing influence of Robert Adam. In Figs. 93–110 some examples of these interesting specimens of the brass-worker's art are given. The Adam influence is apparent in nearly all, especially in those of more delicate detail. It is regrettable that the composition of the brass used at this period was not conducive to resistance of atmospheric effects. In the first volume, in the chapter on "Brass Door and Drawer Furniture," the difference between eighteenth and nineteenth century brass was pointed out. Brass, as is well known, is an alloy of copper and zinc, but the proportions vary very much according to the purpose for which the metal is intended. Thus, where great tenacity is required, as in such articles as these pierced fenders, the proportions are usually three-fourths copper to one-fourth zinc, by weight. The zinc being about half the weight of the copper, the relative masses of the component parts of this alloy are as three to two. The greater the proportion

Fig. 101.

Fig. 102.

BRASS FIRE IMPLEMENTS OF THE LATER EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

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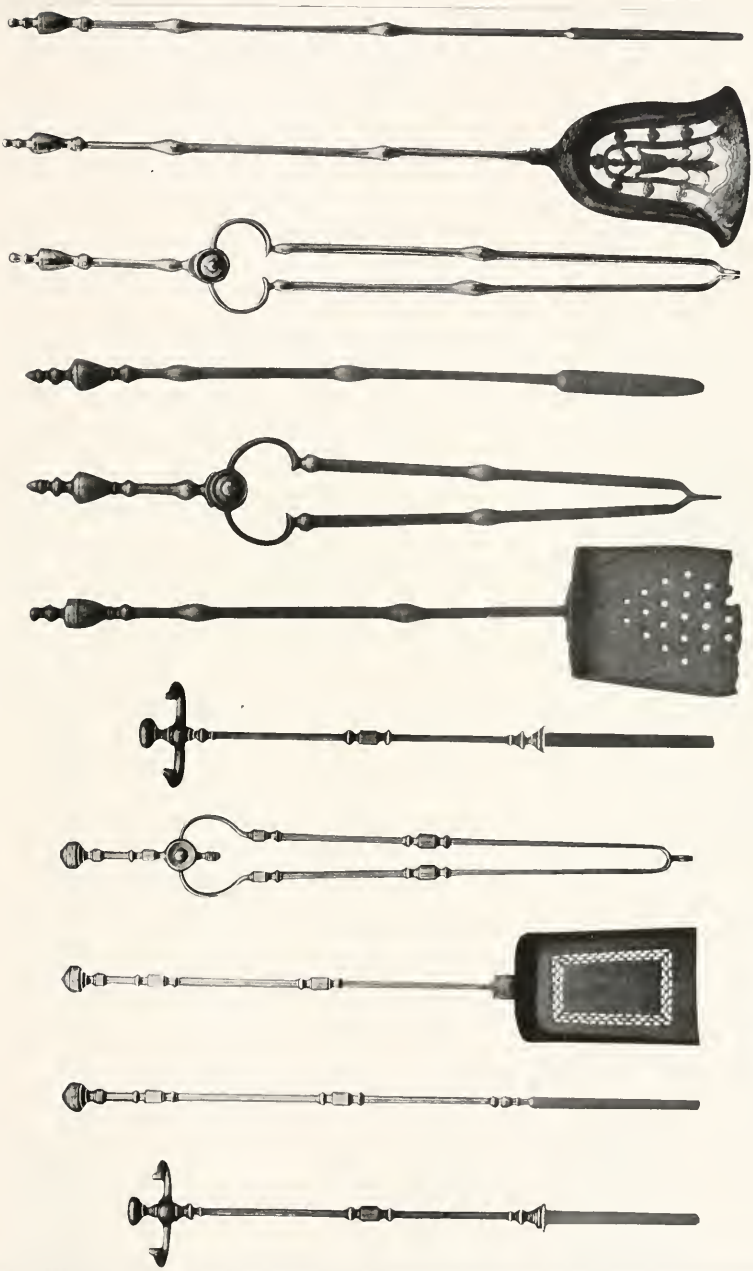

Fig. 105.

Fig. 104.

Fig. 103.

BRASS FIRE IMPLEMENTS OF THE LATER EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

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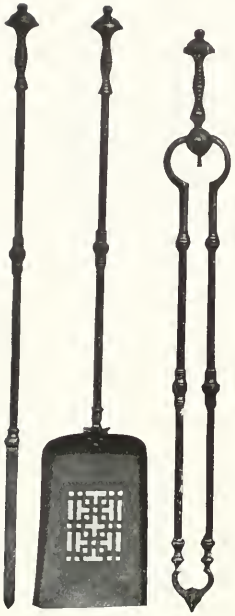

Fig. 106.

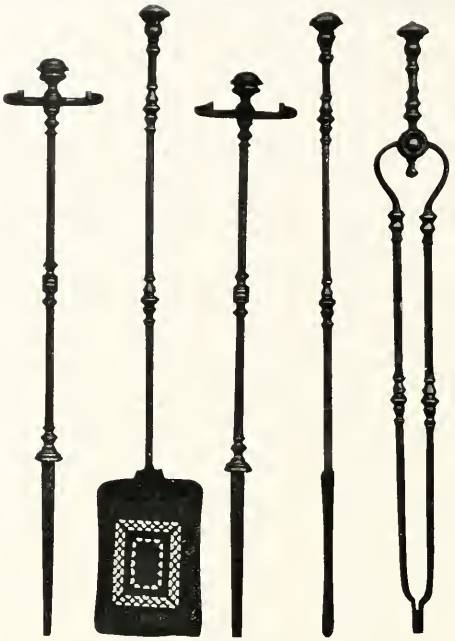

Fig. 107.

Fig. 108.

Fig. 109.

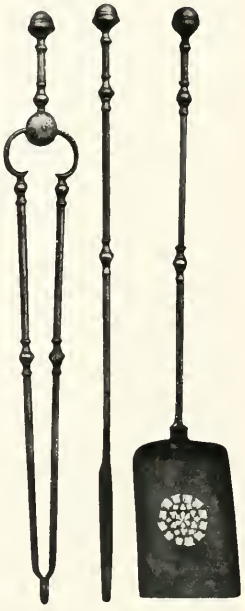

Fig. 110.

BRASS FIRE IMPLEMENTS OF THE LATER EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

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of zinc, the harder and more brittle is the brass, and the less its resistance to the action of the atmosphere. Thus, with the modern brass-mounted bedsteads of commerce, where the alloy is hard and the material thin, the mountings are soon eaten away by the corrosive action of the atmosphere, until they become as brittle as charred paper. During the eighteenth century the relatively high value of copper as compared with zinc led to an alloy being used with the latter metal greatly preponderating. So small is the proportion of copper in some instances—as, for example, in drawer-handles and candlesticks—that these, when burnished, are frequently mistaken for silver. With such articles as these, which are frequently handled and polished, the high proportion of the zinc does not seriously impair the life of the article ; but with pierced fenders, where the air acts on the raw edges of the piercing, and with fire implements used with damp coal, the oxidisable nature of the zinc soon causes the metal to rot away. Thus it is exceedingly rare to find delicate pierced fenders or fire-shovels of the period in anything like a well-preserved condition, although, as a rule, the other implements—tongs, poker and standards, are usually better preserved, owing to their stouter nature and the absence of raw surfaces upon which the atmosphere can act readily. In some instances steel was substituted for brass, but the effects of oxidisation were here still more disastrous in their effects. In some rare instances silver, in alloy with brass, was used, and fire-dogs, upon which considerable sums were sometimes expended in chasing, were often gilded as a protection against the destructive effects of the atmosphere.

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Chapter V.

The Adelphi Lottery.

THE scope of this book being limited by its title, which confines it solely to furniture and woodwork, a chapter which concerns itself with the architectural rather than the furnishing side of the work of the brothers Adam would be inexcusable were it not that certain facts, very material to our purpose, are to be gleaned from an account of the Adelphi Lottery. There is a further excuse in the case of the Adams; their architectural work and their designs for furniture have so much in common, always with a distinct leaning in the direction of bricks and mortar, and especially stucco, that the latter, both in material and *motif*, can often only be styled furniture by straining a definition.

The name "Adelphi" (Gr. brothers) was adopted by the Adams, both in christening the district on the south side of the Strand of which they were the pioneers, and for a signature, or professional name, on many of their original drawings now in the Soane Museum. Their offices were at this period in Robert Street, and thus the brothers were the "Adelphi" of Adelphi.

John, James, Robert and William Adam were all engaged in this enterprise, and they obtained the lease of a plot of land, from the Strand on the north (with certain exceptions) to the Thames on the south, and from Adam Street on the east to William Street on the west, on slightly varying leases, of which from 91¼ to 92¼ years were unexpired in 1774, and on this land they erected, as a speculation, the buildings collectively known as the Adelphi, and comprising Adelphi Terrace, Adam, John, William, Robert and James Streets. The brothers also appear to have been the leaseholders of certain houses in Queen Anne and Mansfield Streets, near Portland Place, which were included in the Adelphi Lottery scheme, and of which more hereafter.

With the exception of many of the window-heads and architraves on the Adelphi Terrace, the district is nearly in the same state as in 1774. The characteristic Adam work is only to be noticed in certain instances (some of the houses were unfurnished in 1774), notably at Nos. 12 and 18 John Street,—in the latter of which the Society of Arts is housed,—the end and the two centre houses in Adelphi Terrace, and the superior and inferior cornices and friezes which run the whole length of the terrace, No. 2 and the doorway of No. 19 Adam Street, the house on the south corner of Adam and John

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Streets,—now the O.P. Club,—the balcony of the third floor of Adelphi Chambers in John Street and the doorway of No. 10 Adelphi Terrace, and the Victoria Institute building, both in John Street.

One particular design of door, architrave and pediment appears to have been used in several instances, notably in Nos. 19 and 20 John Street. These probably represent the latest addition to the Adelphi shortly after 1774. The same pattern of pilaster is also to be seen on many of the houses—an enriched Tuscan capital surmounting a panelled pilaster with stucco ornaments of a highly conventionalised honeysuckle design, the one pattern repeated above the other.

It is probable that all the available capital of the four brothers was sunk in this enterprise; the lottery prospectus frankly states that the scheme has been found to be beyond their means and is therefore unfinished. Added to this, as far as letting the properties, the undertaking appears to have been a failure, many of the houses being let either to the brothers themselves or their business dependents.

In 1773 the Adams appear to have obtained an Act of Parliament, authorising them to submit the whole property to public lottery, and they engaged in the prospectus to issue only such number of tickets as would reimburse them for their outlay, together with a further sum of £1500 allowed by Parliament towards the expenses of the lottery, which they state to be "a Sum not equal to a third part of the expense which must be incurred." Four thousand three hundred and seventy tickets were issued at fifty guineas each, and there were 110 prizes, of an estimated total value of £218,500. The sale of the tickets produced a gross sum of £228,425, and according to the prospectus, they were to be had at the Adams' offices, in Robert Street, Adelphi, "every day, Sundays excepted, from ten o'clock in the morning to six o'clock at night." The drawing was advertised to take place at the Guildhall. The prospectus states: "The Messrs. Adam have thought it unnecessary to give so particular a Description of the Houses in the Adelphi as they have done of the houses in Queen Anne Street and Mansfield Street, as these Buildings are so generally known by Persons who reside in Town . . ."

The first prize, of the value of £50,080, is stated as follows:—

A House in Queen Anne Street, Cavendish Square, with a Ground Rent of £78, 15s. per annum £14,000

A House on the West Side of Mansfield Street, together with 2 Coach Houses, and Stabling for 6 horses, in the occupation of Lord Scarsdale, let for 7, 14 or 21 years, with a Ground Rent of £37, 16s. . . £6,400

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A House on the East Side of Mansfield Street, opposite Lord Scarsdale's, with 2 Coach Houses and Stabling for 6 horses, with a Ground Rent of £37, 16s. £7,700

A House on the Royal Terrace, the second on the West from Adam Street, occupied by John Hart Cotton, Esq., let on lease for 7, 14 or 21 years at £210 per annum. Ground Rent, £34, 13s. . . . £3,200

A House on the East Side of Adam Street and upon the Terrace, let to William Gunthorpe, Esq., on lease for 3, 5, 7 or 11 years at £200 per annum. Ground Rent, £32, 11s. per annum £3,000

A House on the South Side of John Street, second on the West from Adam Street, with a Ground Rent of £22 per annum . . . £2,230

A House on the South Side of John Street, the third West from Adam Street, let to Anthony (Antonio) Zucchi, on lease for 3, 7, 14 or 21 years at £140 per annum; with valuable fixtures. Ground Rent, £22 per annum . £2,400

A House on the South Side of John Street, the fourth West from Adam Street. Ground Rent, £22 per annum £2,230

A House on the South Side of John Street, the fifth West from Adam Street. Ground Rent, £22 per annum £2,230

A House on the South Side of John Street, the seventh West from Adam Street. Ground Rent, £22 per annum £2,230

A House on the South Side of John Street, the eighth West from Adam Street. Ground Rent, £22 per annum £2,230

It will be noticed, from the above, that the houses were not numbered at this date. The failure of the brothers' speculation can be seen from the fact that they were receiving a gross revenue of £396, 9s. at this period, to recoup them for an outlay of £50,080.

The properties allotted to the various prizes are curiously apportioned. Thus the second, value £39,950, includes a "Double Vault on the North Side of Mews Street, between Lower Adam Street and Lower Robert Street, the first West from Lower Adam Street, let to William Adam, Mr. Capel and Messrs. Hodgson & Co. at £34, 13s. per annum." Another of these vaults is let to Topham Beauclerk. Several sets of chambers,—described as "one pair of stairs story, &c.,"—are included in other prizes.

A house on the Royal Terrace, the fifth west from Adam Street, is described as "in the occupation of Robert and James Adam" (the offices were in Robert Street), "let

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on lease to them for 4, 7, 14 or 21 years from Lady Day 1773, at the Tenants' option, at £230 per annum, with the valuable fixtures,—Ground Rent, £34, 13s.,"—and is valued at £3900. The brothers evidently did not renew their option after 1777, as Robert died in 1779 at Albemarle Street. Probably he was glad to escape from the Adelphi.

The house on the South Side of John Street, on the corner of Robert Street, "being the 11th West from Adam Street," is described as being in the occupation of Mr. William Adam, let on lease from Lady Day 1773 for 3, 7, 14 or 21 years, also at the tenants' option, at £150 per annum. John Adam, the fourth brother, does not appear to have been located in the Adelphi.

One house is interesting; a "house and shop in John Street, entering from the Strand, being the 3rd West from Adam Street, in the occupation of Walter Russell, cabinet-maker, Tenant at Will, at £60 per annum," with the note, "This House is greatly underlet." It is a justifiable inference from the above, that this Walter Russell must have been one of the cabinet-makers employed by Robert Adam; this may account for the premises being "greatly underlet." It would be curious to know whether the winner of this ticket was satisfied with the £60 per annum, or tried, in common parlance, to "put the screw on."

The Adams included a number of articles, such as pictures, drawings, furniture, statuary, &c., in some of the smaller prizes. Thus there are pictures by Domenichino, Caracci and Poussin (no initials of the two latter are given), drawings by Clerisseau (the companion of Robert and James at Spalatro seventeen years before) and a "Landskip" by M. Ricci.

The property is all described as belonging to James, Robert, John and William Adam.

Many of the Adelphi houses are faced with stucco, a patent of Robert and James, which was the subject of two actions at law, the last of which was tried before Lord Chief Justice Mansfield, for whom Robert Adam built a "villa" at Hampstead. A good deal of bitter controversy raged round the two brothers. They were described as "beggarly Scots," "hangers-on of Lord Bute," and publicly accused of having filched a portion of the bed of the Thames in their Adelphi scheme. Of this stucco, an account is given in a pamphlet of 1778, *Observations of two Trials at Law respecting Messieurs Adam's New Invented Patent Stucco, with Additional Remarks, by a Practical Plaisterer.* The Adams appear to have purchased the rights of two almost identical compositions, the inventions of Dr. David Wark of Haddington, in Scotland, and Liardet, a Swiss

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clergyman. The actions were fought in the name of the latter patentee. The pamphlet is well worth reading, as the author states that the ingredients as specified in the patent were mixed in Court, and found to produce a result quite different from the finished sample exhibited. The stucco, as actually used, consisted of oil, white lead, slaked lime and sand in certain proportions.

There is no doubt that the powerful influence commanded by Robert and James Adam at this date,—they had recently obtained a special Act of Parliament for their especial benefit,—had as much to do with the verdict they received, as the merit of their stucco. As the "Practical Plaisterer" points out, their specification was so general and the interpretation placed by the Court on the term "colourable imitation" was so wide and arbitrary, that it was almost impossible for an exterior plaster worker to avoid infringing their patent. Perhaps justice and influence coincided at this period; even at the present day they are not so widely removed.

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Chapter VI.

George Hepplewhite of Cripplegate.

OF all the more famous furniture designers and craftsmen of the eighteenth century, George Hepplewhite is, perhaps, the most elusive, considering the important place which he undoubtedly occupies in the history of the furnishing fashions of this period. His books of designs, the *Cabinet-maker and Upholsterer's Guide*, of which there were three editions, in 1788,* 1789 and 1794, were posthumous publications, issued under the style of "A. Hepplewhite & Co."; the initial being probably that of his wife Alice, to whom administration of his estate was granted in 1786. The date of the first edition is nearly two years after the death of its author. In the *Cabinet-maker's London Book of Prices and Designs of Cabinet Work*—two editions, 1788 and 1793—ten designs of furniture signed by Hepplewhite occur, but the date of the book suggests that these were the productions of the firm rather than the individual.

In the previous volume of this book, the designs of Chippendale, as published in the three editions of the *Gentleman and Cabinet Maker's Director*, were examined at some length, and it may prove instructive to subject the *Guide* of Hepplewhite to the like ordeal, to see whether by comparison, or internal evidence, how much credit can be assigned to its author on the score of originality, and to measure the influence which the *Guide* had on the furniture designs of Hepplewhite's day, and how much he was indebted, in turn, to the works of his contemporaries.

Before proceeding with this investigation, however, it will be as well to place before the reader such information as is available regarding the personality of the man himself, although from the almost total absence of authentic records, this is, unfortunately, of the most meagre description. As nearly as can be ascertained, George Hepplewhite was in a fair way of business in Redcross Street, Cripplegate. He left no will, and administration being granted to his widow as next-of-kin, the usual bond was entered into, in which Alice Heppelwhite (?), Robert Philp of John Street, St. James', Clerkenwell, clockmaker, and Charles Wheeler, of Gee Street in the parish of Saint Luke, stocking-maker, bind themselves in the sum of £800, to "John, by Divine Providence, Lord

* The plates in the first edition are dated 1787, which represents the difference in the date of engraving as compared with that of actual publication.

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Archbishop of Canterbury," &c. &c. The bond is marked "under £600," presumably a reference to the amount of the estate. The spelling of the name, Heppelwhite, will be noticed above; but although it might be thought that the widow would be a good authority as to the accuracy of this, it is evident that she was an illiterate woman who was not to be relied upon in the matter of spelling, as the Christian name on the bond is first written as "Aleas," afterwards altered to "Alice."

There is a story current, first recorded, I believe, by Mr. R. S. Clouston in his *English Furniture and Furniture-makers of the Eighteenth Century*, that George Hepplewhite was apprenticed at the Lancaster factory of Gillows. While one would welcome any addition to the meagre data regarding the famous cabinet-maker, this statement must, regretfully, be classed as "not proven"; there is absolutely no documentary evidence to show that Hepplewhite was ever at Lancaster, or in the employ of Gillow. The Lancaster firm were undoubtedly affected by the style of Hepplewhite as expounded in the *Guide*, but this is only evident in their work years after Hepplewhite was dead. There is not the slightest trace of anything in the designs of Gillow before 1775–80 which could be possibly accepted as embryonic Hepplewhite. There is so much in both the designs and the work of the latter which indicates a London training, and the influence of a long country apprenticeship would have been evidenced in numerous ways had Hepplewhite served his time at Lancaster. In the designs of Thomas Sheraton, a native of Stockton-on-Tees, who migrated to London comparatively late in life, there are many of these minute provincialisms which will be noticed in their proper place.

As in the case of Robert Adam, although for a different reason, we are compelled to refer to furniture as being in the style of Hepplewhite rather than from his hand, with the added certainty that no piece of later date than 1786 could have been directly influenced by him. Of his actual work absolutely nothing can be stated with certainty. There are certain pieces at Nostell Priory which may have been his handiwork, but in the absence of invoices or documents of a like nature, it is unsafe to offer any opinion, as there is no single example of absolutely accredited Hepplewhite workmanship to act as a standard of comparison.

In spite of this uncertainty with regard to the actual work of Hepplewhite, and although he, in common with nearly all the other craftsmen of this period, borrowed extensively from the designs of others, yet in referring to a piece of furniture as being in the style of Hepplewhite something definite is indicated in the design which clearly distinguishes it from others. Whether the credit for this originality is strictly due to Hepplewhite, or whether, after this lapse of time, his name has been applied to classify

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certain design-features to which he was himself quite foreign, it is not possible to state exactly. Nor is this material to our purpose. The Hepplewhite style is quite distinct, in many important particulars, from that of Sheraton; and although there is no doubt that the two merge together in a good many examples, it is possible to illustrate certain pieces which are just as distinctly "Hepplewhite" as there are others which are characteristically "Sheraton."

The work of Hepplewhite,—as it is convenient to style it for the sake of clearness,—falls naturally into three divisions, namely, the French, the Adam, and the English. In the first we have a frank copying of French motives, with the individual character of the craftsman superadded; in the second, the influence of Robert Adam is seen in a more or less marked manner. There is no doubt that the style of Adam permeated the furniture fashions of his time very thoroughly. Hepplewhite was especially affected; it is possible, especially in his chairs, to trace a gradual progression from the typical Hepplewhite to the equally typical Adam, and it is difficult to state exactly where the one ends and the other begins. Robert Adam, of course, imposed his Roman ornament on Roman forms, in the instances where he had direct control, but he was so much in the hands of the craftsmen who worked under his direction that it is little wonder that their own personality should intrude in many instances. One cannot help the supposition, also, that Hepplewhite must have been frequently commissioned to furnish some of the rooms designed by Adam, as his departures from the correct style of the architect are often so extensive, although nearly always tending towards greater comfort and less artificiality, that it is impossible to believe that Robert Adam would willingly have countenanced them.

The third division, referred to above, has been styled Hepplewhite's "English" manner in default of a better name. It is in this branch that the designs of Hepplewhite and Sheraton frequently approximate very closely: in fact, much of the painted and decorated furniture of the years from 1785 to 1795 was made by so many of the craftsmen of the period, and the designs were often such common property to all, that it is difficult to assign them to either Sheraton or Hepplewhite, other than for the reason that the designs, or others similar to them, were given an artistic permanency in both the *Guide* and the *Drawing Book*, whereas the work of the more obscure makers has been merged, and lost, as far as separate identity is concerned, in the common ruck of "late eighteenth century" furniture which has survived to the present day.

In the following chapters, therefore, the examples illustrated have been styled as "Hepplewhite," on the sole authority of the *Guide*, in the pages of which it is possible

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to trace a certain individuality which is absent in Sheraton's *Drawing Book* or in any other of the design-books of this period.

Before, however, proceeding with the actual pieces of Hepplewhite furniture, it may be instructive to examine the *Cabinet-maker and Upholsterer's Guide*, in the same manner as was pursued in the case of Chippendale's *Director*, and to see whether any information of importance can be gleaned from the internal evidence afforded by this book. The references, in every case, to "Hepplewhite" furniture indicate examples which are in the style known by his name, and do not imply, in any way, pieces made by his hand, or even after his designs. It is also understood that the *Guide* is to be considered as a kind of illustrated catalogue advertising the wares of the firm of "A. Hepplewhite & Co.," and not as a series of designs necessarily emanating from the hand or brain of George Hepplewhite himself. The term "Hepplewhite," in fact, is held to indicate either a style or the work of a firm, not that of an individual.

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Chapter VII.

Adam-Hepplewhite Furniture.

FOR the sake of clearness and brevity the terms employed in the title-heading of this chapter are used in a much broader sense than formerly. That of "Adam" is intended to represent any pieces which were actually designed by either Robert and James, or, by reason of strict fidelity to the principles of the style they inaugurated, might have been evolved under their direct supervision. "Hepplewhite" furniture is taken to include such pieces as indicate the influence of a book rather than of a man, namely, the *Cabinet-maker and Upholsterer's Guide*. We know so little of the actual personality of George Hepplewhite of Cripplegate that it is impossible to assess the degree of his influence on the furniture of his time, either quantitatively or qualitatively. During the latter half of the eighteenth century so many small joiners were established, of considerable skill both in the manufacture and the designing of furniture, that it is also by no means certain whether the published design-books, such as those of Hepplewhite, Manwaring, Crunden and others represented their own creations, or whether they were merely collections of the designs current at this period, edited by the publishers and sub-edited by their engravers. Some starting-point must, however, be found, and for the sake of convenience the pieces which accord with the principles of the two styles are here dubbed as "Adam" and "Hepplewhite" respectively. When the collective work of Robert Adam and the Hepplewhite school is broadly reviewed, it will be seen that there are details peculiar to each which justify this classification, although the two gradually merge, as it is the purpose of this chapter to show.

Fig. 111 is a mahogany bookcase with the panels of the doors filled with a brass trellis-work, pateraed on the intersections. This method of protecting books was very usual at this period, a species of compromise between the open and the closed bookcase. The central door is flanked with flat sunk pilasters which open with the door. These pilasters are taken up into the frieze, the lower members of the cornice being broken to receive them. The frieze is fluted on the wings, and in the centre is ornamented with ringed pateræ in the characteristic Adam manner. The pediment, with its central medallion and flanking griffins, and the delicate vases on the corners, are all cut from pear-wood, the carving being finished with the agate tool in obvious imitation of the modelling of Wedgwood ware. In 1771 the famous Etruria works of Josiah Wedgwood were built

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Fig. 111.
MAHOGANY BOOKCASE.
In the possession of Messrs. Gill and Reigate.
10 ft. 6 ins. high. × 6 ft. 4 ins. wide.
Top, 1 ft. 2½ ins. deep. Bottom, 1 ft. 7 ins. deep.
Date about 1780.

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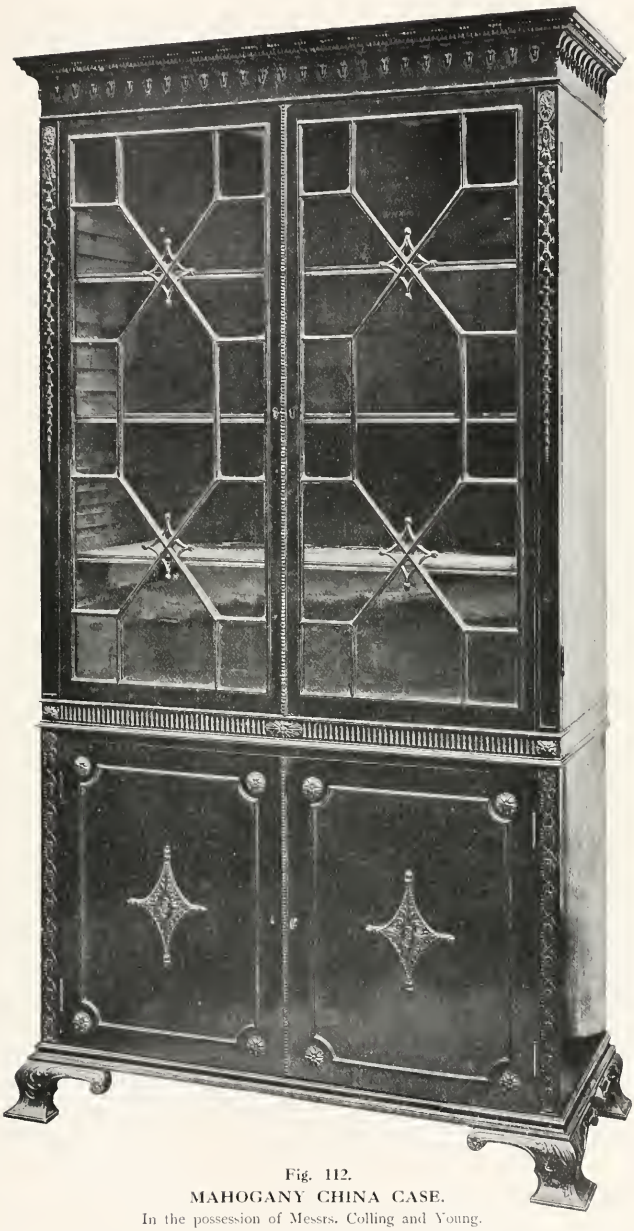

Fig. 112.
MAHOGANY CHINA CASE.
In the possession of Messrs. Colling and Young.
7 ft. 4 ins. high × 3 ft. 8 ins. wide × 1 ft. 1½ ins. deep.
Date about 1775–80.

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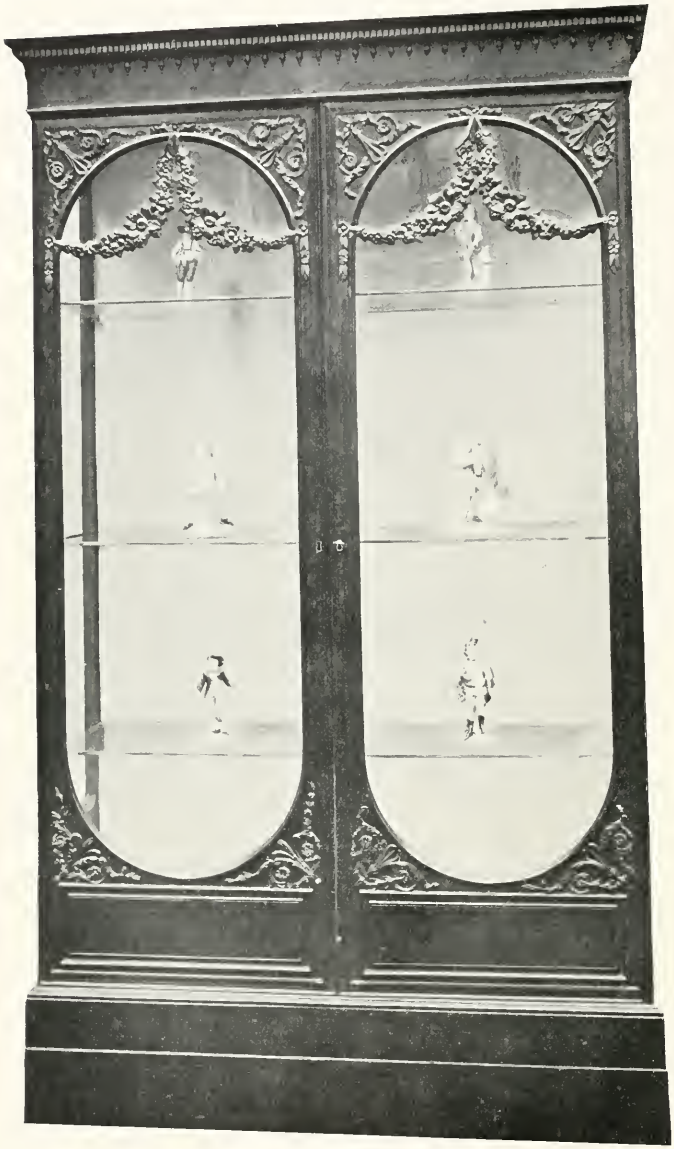

Fig. 113.

MAHOGANY CHINA CASE.

7 ft. 8 ins. high × 4 ft. 2 ins. wide × 1 ft. 3 ins. deep.

Date about 1775-80.

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near Newcastle-under-Lyme, and at this date the ware was in high favour with the cultured classes. There is a considerable amount of unassuming detail lavished on this bookcase, such as the "pearling" of the small bead under the ogee of the cornice, the "ribbed" dentils, and the carving of the plinth moulding. The drawers are edged with small "cock-beads," and the ring handles are fluted and chased. The general proportions of the piece are accurate and dignified, and it is worthy of being regarded as a typical example of the pure Adam style.

Fig. 112 is a china cabinet rather than a bookcase, and although the patera and pendent fuchsia flowers in the panels of the side pilasters flanking the upper doors, the pateraed decoration of those below, the pateræ and flutes of the dividing frieze, and the decoration of the lower doors are all in the manner of Adam, other details such as the bracket-feet, the lattice-work of the upper doors, and the bead-and-reel and the "pear-drops" of the cornice are all suggestive of the influence of the cabinet-maker. The general proportions and style of the piece are also too reminiscent of furniture and too far removed from the general style of a building to be directly due to Robert Adam.

Fig. 113 has the same peculiarities; the detail of the carving in the lunettes of the doors is very similar to the base of the back of the master's chair, Fig. 38, and the design of the whole piece appears to have been based on that of a Roman pedestal. There is a good deal, however, which is foreign to the style of Adam, although his influence is apparent in many instances. The same detail of dentilled and "pear-drop" cornice as in Fig. 112 will be noticed.

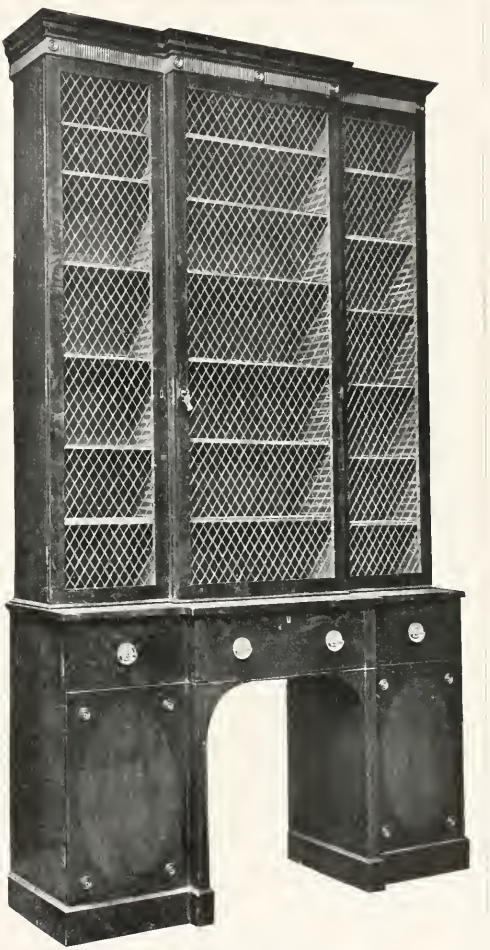

Fig. 114.
MAHOGANY BOOKCASE.
In the possession of Messrs. Gill and Reigate.
9 ft. 7½ high × 5 ft. 3 ins. wide.
Upper carcase 11 ins. deep. Lower carcase 1 ft. 6 ins. deep.
Date about 1775.

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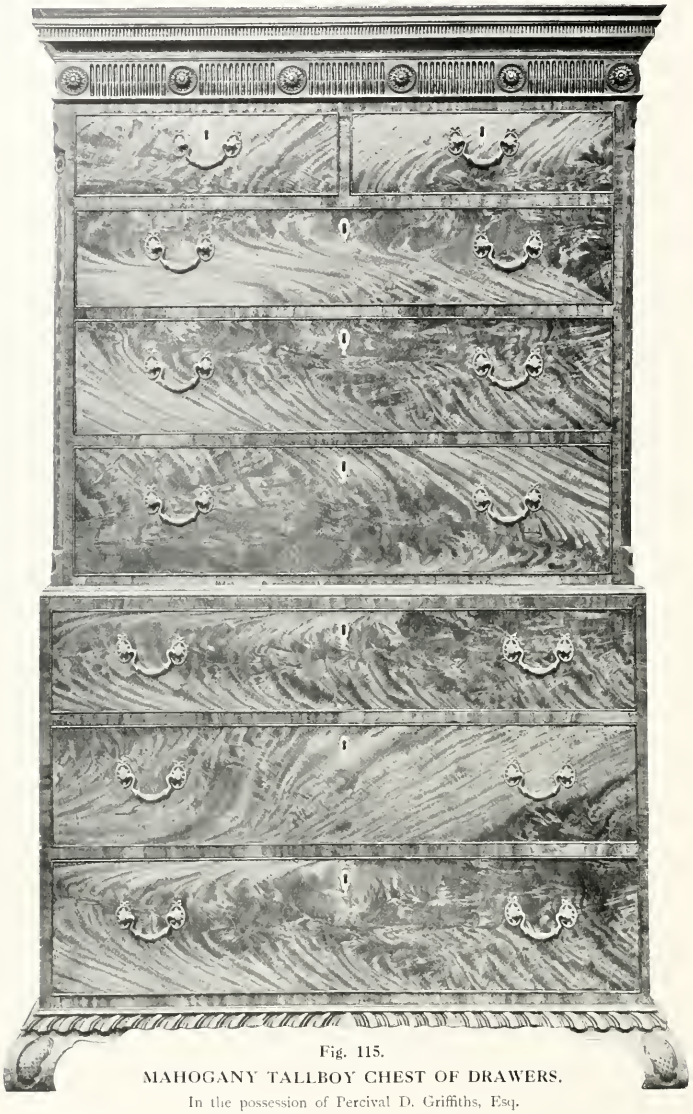

Fig. 115.

MAHOGANY TALLBOY CHEST OF DRAWERS.

In the possession of Percival D. Griffiths, Esq.

Upper Carcase.	Lower Carcase.
3 ft. 3½ ins. wide.	3 ft. 5 ins. wide.
3 ft. 2½ ins. high.	2 ft. 9 ins. high.
1 ft. 6¾ ins. deep.	1 ft. 7½ ins. deep.

Date about 1765–70.

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The mahogany bookcase, Fig. 114, has the same lattice-work in the upper doors as in Fig. 112, but here the mesh is much finer, without any bolting of the intersections—a simple wire mesh. The door framings are finished square, without the usual ogee moulding, and glass panels have been added at a later date. The frieze is fluted, with pateræ plainly turned, without carving, the same pattern being repeated on the lower doors. These are veneered on flush framings, with ovals of curl mahogany surrounded by plain wood.

Similar details to the preceding will be noticed in the beautiful double chest of drawers, Fig. 115. It would be difficult to find a finer specimen of eighteenth-century cabinet-work designed under Adam influence than this. The cornice, of somewhat peculiar section, is fluted on the fillet in place of the usual dentilling. The frieze is "stop-fluted," divided with turned and carved pateræ very finely executed. The drawers are cock-beaded, and veneered with choice curl-figured mahogany, which has toned, with age, to a beautiful golden-brown shade. The drawer rails are crossbanded with the same wood. The chamfered pilasters are inlaid with very delicate marqueterie, a rosette with pendent "husks," in green and brown stained holly. The inlaid escutcheons are of ivory, and the handles are finely wrought and chased, and plated with silver. The gadroon plinth moulding and carved bracket-feet demonstrate the influence of the school of Chippendale, and although the pedigree of this double

Fig. 116.
MAHOGANY CUPBOARD.
In the possession of Messrs. Gill and Reigate.
6 ft. 7½ ins. high × 2 ft. 10 ins. wide × 1 ft. 7½ ins. deep on lower carcase.
Date about 1770.

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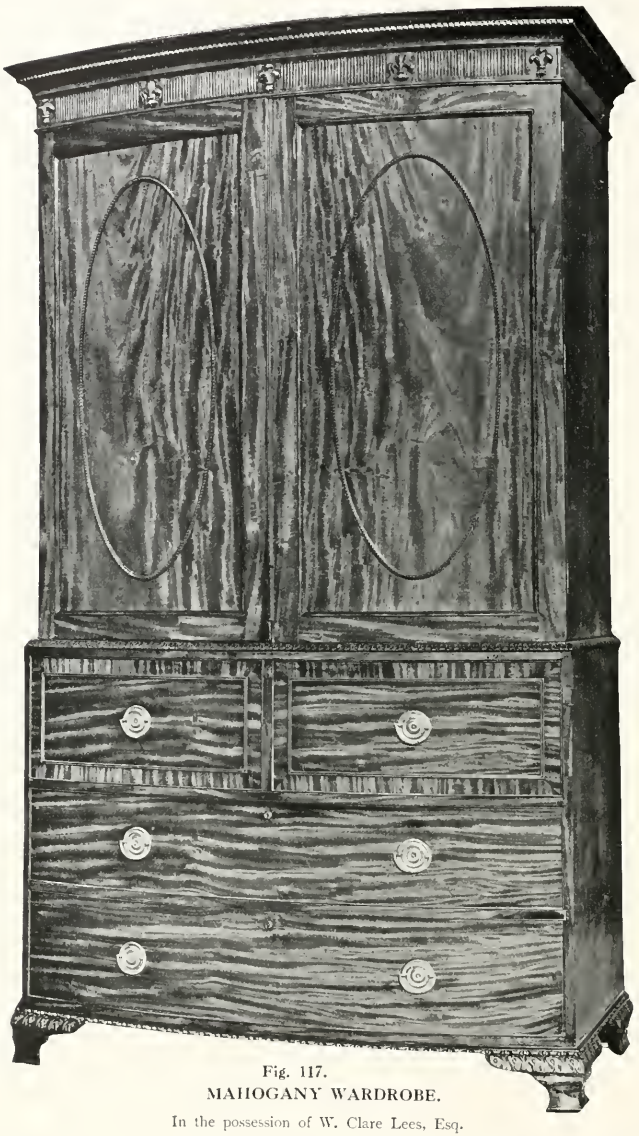

Fig. 117.
MAHOGANY WARDROBE.
In the possession of W. Clare Lees, Esq.
7 ft. 4 ins. high × 4 ft. wide.
Date about 1770.

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Fig. 118.

MAHOGANY INLAID SECRETARY CABINET.

In the possession of Alan Mackinnon, Esq.

Upper part.—3 ft. $1\frac{1}{2}$ ins. wide × 3 ft. $5\frac{1}{2}$ ins. high × $11\frac{1}{2}$ ins deep.

Lower part.—3 ft. $2\frac{3}{4}$ ins. wide × 3 ft. $2\frac{1}{4}$ ins. high. × 1 ft. 9 ins. deep.

Date about 1780.

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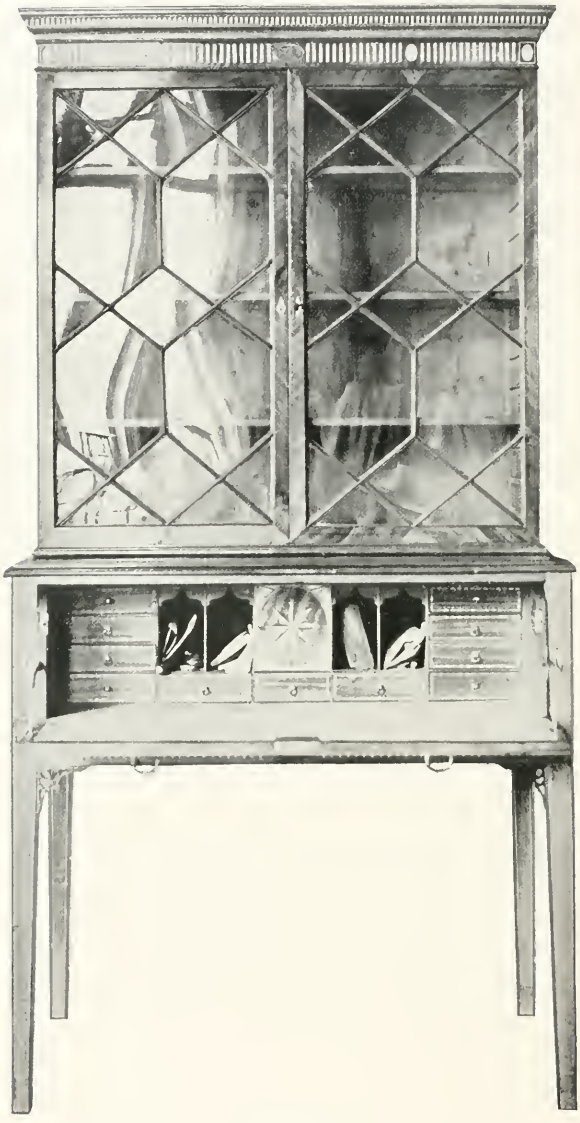

Fig. 119.

THE MAHOGANY SECRETARY CABINET (Fig. 118) shown open.

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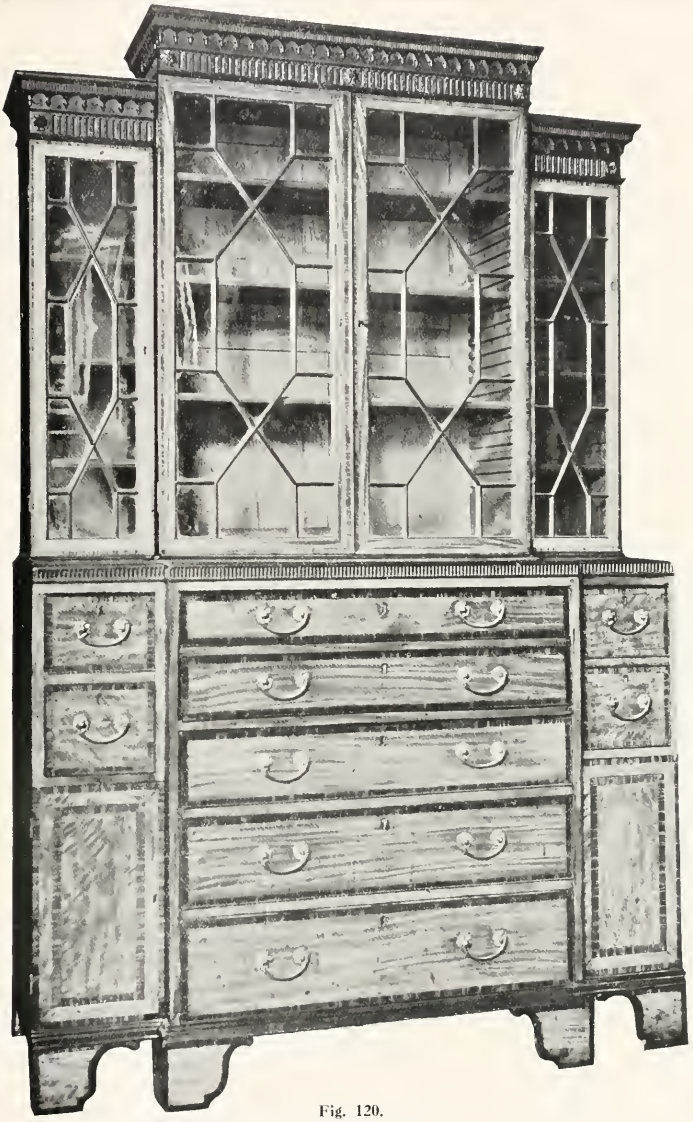

Fig. 120.

SATINWOOD AND MAHOGANY SECRETARY BOOKCASE.

In the possession of Alan Mackinnon, Esq.

Upper carcase.—Wings: 10¾ ins. wide × 12¾ ins. deep × 3 ft. 4½ ins. high.
Centre: 2 ft. 9 ins. wide × 14½ ins. deep × 3 ft. 10 ins. high.
Lower carcase.—Wings: 10⅛ ins. wide × 20 ins. deep.
Centre: 2 ft. 10½ ins. wide × 21⅜ ins. deep × 3 ft. 6¼ ins. high.

Date about 1785-90.

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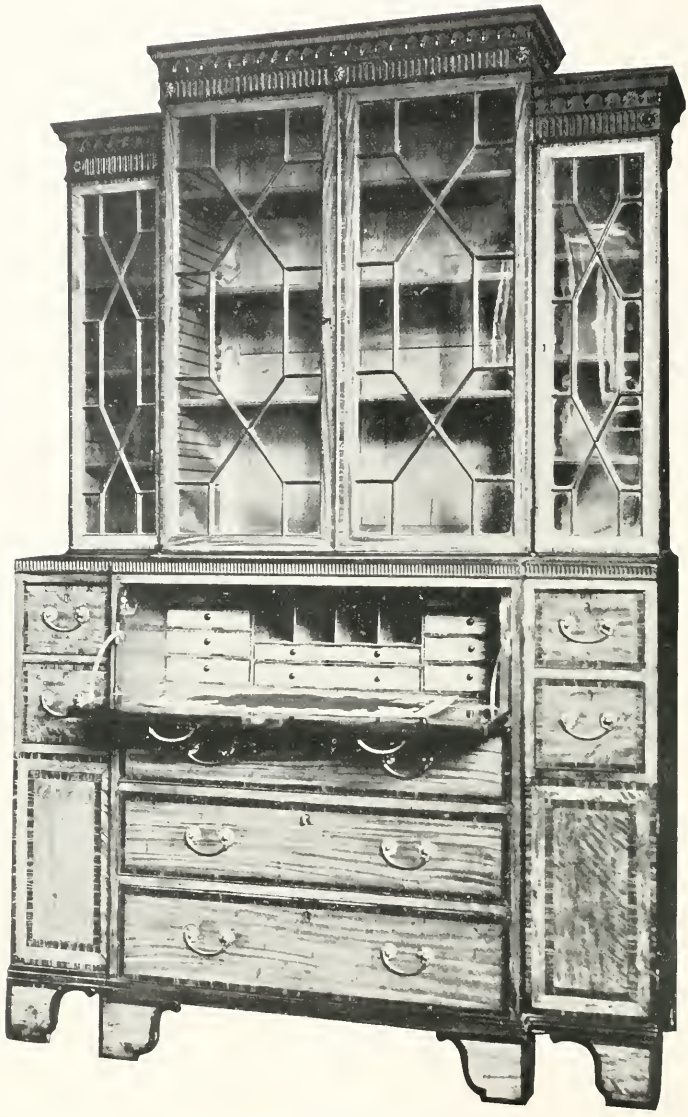

Fig. 121.

THE SECRETARY BOOKCASE (Fig. 120) shown open.

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chest is not known, it was evidently the work of an important maker, possibly that of Chippendale himself.

Fig. 116 is a cabinet, quite simple in detail excepting for the dentilled cornice and fluted and pateraed frieze, which shows to what extent the use of fine curl mahogany had progressed between 1770 and 1780. The door framings are veneered with figured wood, feathered from the centre of each style and rail, large curls being used for the panels, which are surrounded with bolection mouldings, hollow cornered in the general fashion of this period. With the exception of the detail of the frieze, there is no suggestion of even the influence of Adam in this piece. In the next example, Fig. 117, there is an indication of the Hepplewhite school on the frieze, where the flutes are divided by carved representations of the Prince of Wales' feathers, a *motif* especially characteristic of "A. Hepplewhite and Co." Employed as a device in the back splats of chairs, this detail is frequently claimed as being their especial creation. In this wardrobe the "swept" front is a detail which does not appear to have been ever applied by Robert Adam, the play of light afforded by a large shaped and polished surface evidently jarring with his severely classical notions.

Figs. 118 and 119 are the two views of a very interesting secretary cabinet, purely Hepplewhite in character, showing the later phase of the Adam influence, where the flutes and paterae are inlaid instead of carved. This cabinet is veneered with mahogany, originally pale, and now bleached by the action of time and sunlight to nearly the colour of satinwood. The veneer on the framing of the doors is feathered from the centre, and the escutcheons are cut from satinwood, and inlaid. The same wood is used for the dentils, flutes, and paterae. The astragal mouldings of the diamond lattice are delicate, with the fillets very small, and intersect with the framing ovolo right into the corners, the mitring of the veener prolonging the line to the outside of the door. The glass is nearly all original. The secretary is fitted with four pigeon-holes, with cut-out bracket or "valance" pieces, a central door veneered with a mahogany oval with a satinwood surround and an eight-pointed star in the centre, and eleven drawers of mahogany edged with a herring-boned line and very pretty ring handles. The fall is lined, supported on quadrants, and secured with the usual spring catches on the corners. The legs are inlaid with oval fans, and have the characteristic Hepplewhite inside taper before referred to. Small fretted brackets connect the legs to the under rail, which latter has the same inlay of flutes and oval fans with the central marqueterie shell as in the frieze. The entire piece is very refined and unassuming, a charming example of the cabinet-work of the period from 1775 to 1785.

A more important example is shown in the next two illustrations, Figs. 120 and 121. This is a secretary bookcase of somewhat later date than the preceding, very typical of the period just prior to the arrival of Thomas Sheraton in London. The carcase-work is of mahogany throughout, veneered on the outside faces with satinwood banded

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with rosewood. A peculiarity of the construction is that the centre and wings are finished on the sides as well as the fronts, so that the central part is complete when the wings are removed. On either side of the secretaire is one deep drawer, fronted to simulate two, and each fitted as a three-bottle cellarette with a central drainage hole. The secretaire pulls forward, with a fall-down front lined with leather, and supported on quadrants as in the previous example. Inside are four pigeon-holes, two long and eight smaller drawers. Of these latter, the one on the bottom right-hand side is fitted for ink-bottles and pens, the one on the top left hand divided with eight partitions for the orderly arrangement of visiting cards. These divisions are of important size as compared with that of the present-day gentleman's card, technically known as a "third." The upper doors are veneered with satinwood, with a narrow crossbanding of rosewood and a tracery of mahogany. Nearly every section has its original glass intact. The inside of each

Fig. 122.
MAHOGANY LIBRARY BOOKCASE.
In the possession of Messrs. Gill and Reigate.
11 ft. 3 ins. long × 8 ft. 9 ins. high × 1 ft. 0 ins. deep.
Date about 1770-80.

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carcase-end is grooved for the adjustment of the shelves, and the backs are framed and panelled. The cornice and frieze are of mahogany, the dentils inlaid, but the flutes and the pateræ carved. The workmanship throughout of this piece is of the very highest order. It was evidently made to the order of a wealthy patron, and has been specially designed for removal from one house to another—probably from town to country and *vice versa*—as a favoured piece of furniture. In one of these houses the piece was probably divided, the centre standing by itself and the two wings joined together, temporarily, with screws, to form a separate bookcase. The inside ends of the wings are kept purposely thin to this end, and the locks of each door are "link-plated."

So far, we have seen the influence of the Adam style in each of the examples illustrated, in a gradually decreasing degree. In the library bookcase, Fig. 122, this has declined, almost to the vanishing point, the only details suggestive of Robert Adam being the central vase of the pediment and the oval carved patera below. There is hardly anything sufficiently distinctive in the design of this bookcase to establish a date, beyond the hollow corners of the mouldings in the lower doors ornamented with carved pateræ, and the detail of the cornice, a small ogee and fillet and a comparatively large hollow and bead under, which is a certain indication, in original pieces, of a date after 1770.

Considerable space has been devoted to this question of the evolution from the style of Adam to that of Hepplewhite, as it is one of considerable importance to our subject. To those who study the development of English furniture of the eighteenth century very closely, it is always interesting to mark the influence of one designer or craftsman on another. The old-fashioned general classification of the subject under hard and fast general headings such as "Adam," "Hepplewhite," and "Sheraton" has long ago proved to be woefully inaccurate in points of detail. Each of these designers occupies a well-merited place in the history of English furniture of his period, and to show how the one was indebted to the other, and all three to the numerous joiners and designers of their time whose name and fame has been lost to posterity, detracts not one whit from their real position, but shows rather that, like all real artists, they were students until the close of their career, and did not disdain to profit by the experience and the teaching of others, even those of far lesser note in their profession. Were it possible to know the industrial history of this period as exactly as we do that of our own time, it would probably be found that a wholesale transference of credit for originality would have to be effected, which would impart a lustre to the name of many a worthy craftsman who had gone to his grave, with nothing left to posterity beyond the unspoken eloquence of certain pieces of furniture, fashioned with such conscientious skill that they have withstood the vicissitudes of a century and a half, and remain to-day as models of designing skill for the cabinet-makers of our day to imitate and to admire.

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Chapter VIII.

The Cabinet-maker and Upholsterer's Guide.

IN the attempt to critically examine any of the books of designs which were published during the latter half of the eighteenth century, several important points have to be borne in mind. The natural desire is to assess the measure of originality due to each other, and at the same time to accurately judge the artistic merit of the several designs, and the value of each piece for the purpose it was intended. In this connection it is almost impossible to dissociate a design for an article of furniture from the method in which it is presented, *i.e.* the pictorial value of the sketch. An exceptionally fine piece, with the general proportions quite accurate, the lines carefully studied and the details well chosen and executed, would lose immeasurably if portrayed by a poor draughtsman, whereas, on the contrary, a false idea of the artistic merit of an indifferent piece would be obtained if it were sketched by a cultured designer, who would, unconsciously perhaps, rectify all errors of proportion, line and detail. The question of artistic convention plays also an important part; far more so than one would, at first, imagine. Take any of the photographic representations of chairs given in this book, for instance, and compare them with any of the chair designs from Chippendale's *Director*, given in the second volume. The verdict, as to natural pose and general appearance, would, almost certainly, be in favour of the photographs, and yet we do not habitually see chairs in this way, unless we are sitting, or occupying a position where the eye is not more than three feet from the ground. The convention during the eighteenth century appears to have been that all furniture should be represented as viewed from a height of eye-line five feet from the floor; hence chairs, and such-like articles, although drawn as they are habitually seen, appear to be distorted and out of drawing.

Another important point to be considered in judging the designs in these eighteenth century books is the submerging, to a great extent, of the personality of the draughtsman in that of the engraver. In the present day of facsimile photographic processes of reproduction,—half-tone, zincography, photogravure, collotype and lithography,—it is possible to reproduce any monochrome sketch with absolute fidelity, no subtlety of line or shading being lost or altered in the slightest degree. The age of xylography is not so far removed, however, that many artists can remember how their drawings were radically altered by translation into wood-engraving. Worse even than this, the one

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engraver, with a particular style of line and texture, frequently had the knack of making the work of two draughtsmen, of totally unlike technical qualities in their sketches, resemble each other closely in the reproductions. This applied with especial force to the period before photography lent its aid to the wood-engraver. In spite of these drawbacks, however, xylography was a process admitting of great freedom in texture as compared with the steel-engraving of the previous era, and the mechanical copper-plate work of the eighteenth century. Added to this, very few of the commercial engravers of this period were artists, or even draughtsmen; they were copyists, purely and simply. In the case of Robert Adam,—apart from the fact that from his position he could afford to employ the best engravers,—the drawings prepared for the *Works in Architecture* are monuments of painstaking skill, carefully drawn in ink outline and shaded by graduated washes of sepia. At a distance of a few feet it is almost impossible to distinguish them from the engravings made after them. The cabinet-makers of the period, especially those of lowly position, were not so fortunately circumstanced. Chippendale, Ince and Mayhew and Thomas Johnson appear to have either been able to employ a competent draughtsman-engraver,—the conclusion that the two professions were united is irresistible from a study of their books,—or else they purchased the plates outright or commissioned so many proofs to be taken from them by the author whose name posterity has failed to preserve. In the usual way, however, a "joyner" or chair-maker would submit either rough sketches or details of the articles of furniture he wished to illustrate to an engraver, and the rest was left to his skill in draughtsmanship, frequently, it must be confessed, with somewhat fatal results. Unless the craftsman possessed the necessary technical skill to actually engrave his own plates,—an almost impossible contention,—he was absolutely at the mercy of his engraver. His drawings could be copied, well or indifferently, according to the skill of the one he could afford to employ, but there was absolutely no mechanical means of transferring his sketches to the plate exactly as they were drawn. A good deal has been said, and written, of the vile draughtsmanship of Robert Manwaring, as evidenced in the *Real Friend* and other of his books, whereas these are no evidences at all of his skill or otherwise, beyond the fact that he probably could not draw at all. He was cursed with a bad engraver, and nothing more.

We have seen, in the chapter on Chippendale's *Director*, that the strong similarity,—one might almost say the identity of character,—between this book and the *System* of Ince and Mayhew is strong presumptive evidence that the actual drawings were neither the work of Chippendale nor Ince. Applying the same process of reasoning to Hepplewhite's *Guide*, the dissimilarity between the proportions of certain pieces of otherwise identical design illustrated in the *Guide* and in the first edition of the *London Book of*

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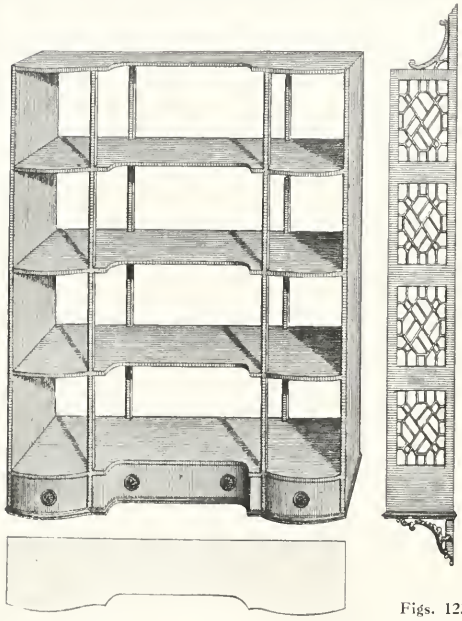
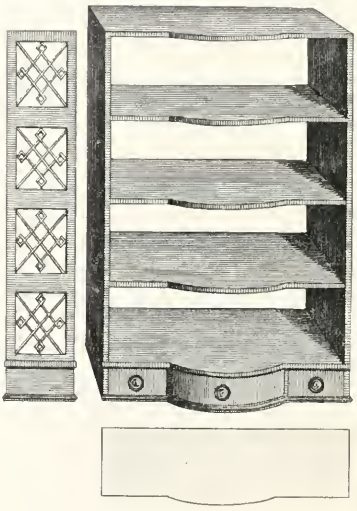
Prices,—the work of Shearer,—is evidence of the engravings being made after designs specially prepared for the *Guide*, probably by Hepplewhite, who may have been, and possibly was, engaged on the sketches for some years before his death. Bearing in mind that George Hepplewhite had his factory in Redcross Street to supervise, it is not unreasonable to allow a period of from six to ten years for the sketches for the plates in the *Guide*, especially as many bear obvious signs of having been previously made.

There is another point here, which merits some consideration, that of individuality, or style, as it is generally termed. In the chapters on Chippendale, in the second volume, the essential differences between the actual work and the style of Chippendale were insisted upon at some length. We were compelled to attempt some arbitrary scheme of classification such as this, even though it excluded many pieces actually produced by Chippendale, and included others, the work of his trade rivals. The only alternative course would have been to ear-mark every piece which emanated from the workshops in St. Martin's Lane, whether Chinese cabinets or kitchen tables, and to keep in touch with them from the date of their manufacture to the present day. This is, of course, an absurd suggestion, but there is no way other than resolving a certain number of pieces, which conform, in a more or less general sense, to certain canons of design, under





Figs. 123 and 124.
HANGING SHELVES.
Plate 92 in all editions of the *Guide*.

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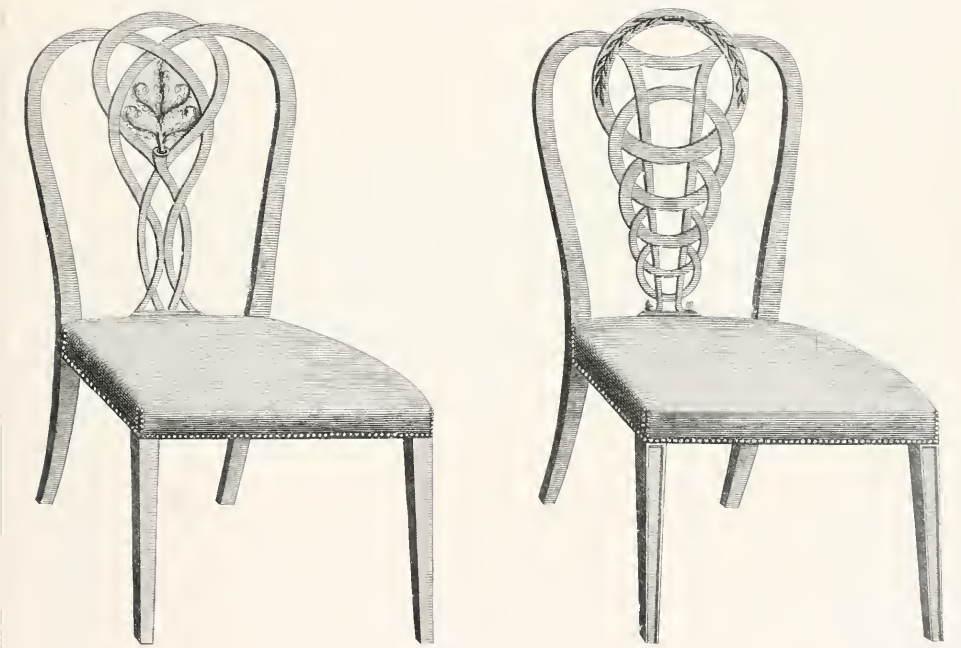
the one heading of the Chippendale style. It is inevitable that the same system should have to be adopted in the case of Hepplewhite. If we were to judge by the sole criterion of the *Guide*, the Hepplewhite style would have to include much that properly belongs either to Chippendale or Adam. Figs. 123 and 124, both reproduced from the *Guide*, are examples of this; hanging china shelves[1] very similar to Fig. 123 have already been illustrated in Figs. 345 and 346 in the second volume, under the heading of Chippendale, to which they properly belong, and Fig. 128 is characteristic of the work of Robert Adam, and considered wholly on its merits, would certainly be referred to him. The obvious fact was, that Hepplewhite, in common with the other makers of design books of this period, collected together examples of all the styles which were in vogue at the time, giving, naturally, the preponderance to such designs as pleased his own individual fancy the most, or those which represented pieces which he had actually made. It must not be

[1] The following is the reference to these hanging shelves from the *Guide*:—HANGING SHELVES.—*Two designs, with different patterns for fretwork, are given. These are often wanted as Book-shelves in closets or Ladies' rooms: they also are adapted to place China on; should be made of mahogany.*



Figs. 125 and 126.

CHAIRS.

Plate 5 in the first edition of the *Guide*. This plate does not appear in the second and third editions. (See Fig. 36 of Vol. II.)

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forgotten that these books of designs, with the exceptions of the *Works in Architecture of R. and J. Adam*,—for reasons which have already been explained,—and the *Drawing Book* of Sheraton,—for others which will be dealt with at a later stage,—were, first and foremost, trade catalogues, intended to illustrate and advertise the wares which their authors produced. Even the *Works in Architecture* was intended to advertise the practice, if not the wares, of the brothers Adam. Sheraton's *Drawing Book* was, perhaps, the only purely publishing speculation, as distinguished from a tradesman's risk or that of a professional man, of all the eighteenth century design books. Perhaps this is why Thomas Sheraton died, as he lived, in poverty and privation.

Of the three editions of the *Guide*, the third (1794) is a reprint of the second (1789). The first (1788, or rather 1787, if we are to reckon from the date of engraving) is slightly modified in the reissue, a few of the plates being omitted—Nos. 5 and 25, for instance—and others added in their place. The first edition appears to have been hurriedly prepared, and issued within two years of the death of the founder of the firm. This may account for the inclusion of certain of the designs which, whether in the manner of Chippendale or Adam, were certainly foreign to the style of Hepplewhite.

The two chairs, Plate 5 in the first edition of the *Guide*, are here reproduced in Figs. 125 and 126. They are an instance of how, in the hurried issue of this first edition, many

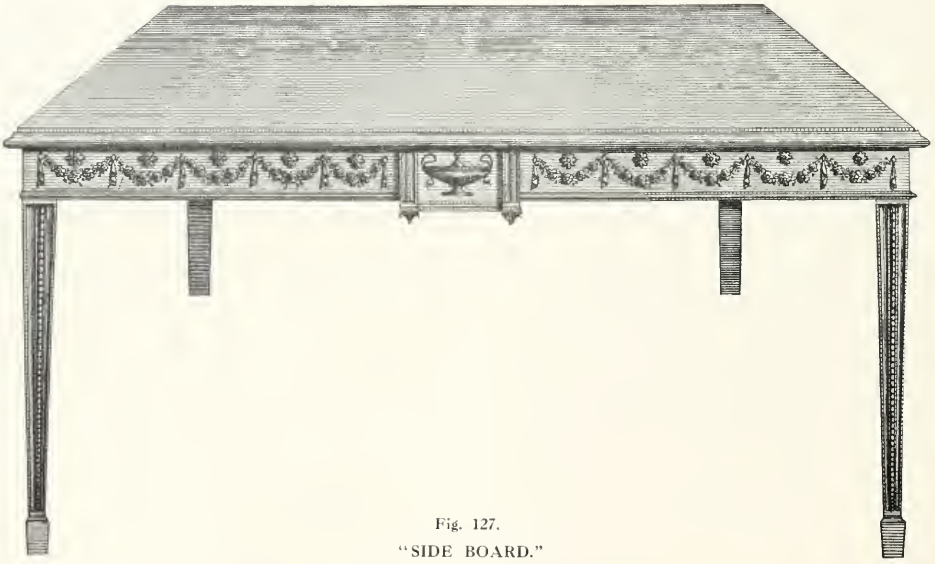

Fig. 127.
"SIDE BOARD."
Plate 32 in all editions of the *Guide*.

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of the current patterns of the time were requisitioned for the book, without the slightest regard for originality or the canons of any particular style. With the development of the styles of Chippendale and Adam in mind, and the general knowledge of that of Hepplewhite, now under review, it would appear that these two designs were in the nature of freaks, conforming to no known style of the period. This is, however, not the case. If persistent repetition of the one class of design form may be said to establish a definite manner—and there is no other canon by which the origin of a style can be judged—these two chairs may be described as typical Manwaring. The personality of the minor craftsmen of the eighteenth century has been so absorbed in that of their better known, although probably not more illustrious trade rivals, that we lose sight of the fact that Robert Manwaring did much to establish a style of his own. Whether his manner is a pleasing or artistic one, or no, is beside the question; certainly the vile draughtsmanship displayed in his published books did much to mar the appreciation of his capabilities as a designer. This book, concerning itself, as it does, with the eighteenth century styles in furniture, has perforce to accept the good with the bad. There is strong evidence in the omission of this Plate 5 from the subsequent editions of the *Guide*, that this style of Manwaring was acknowledged. This plate is certainly a good instance of how inaccurate a procedure it is to style everything contained in the *Guide* as "Hepplewhite."

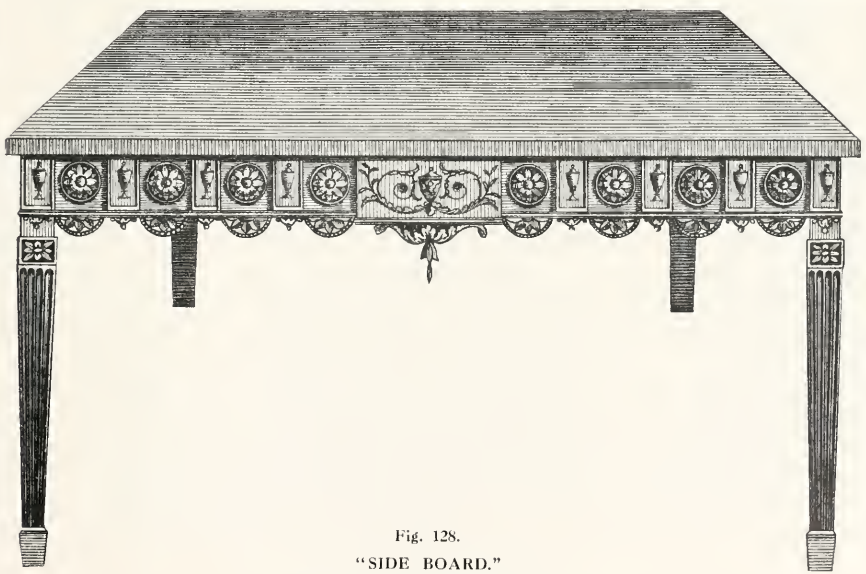

Fig. 128.
"SIDE BOARD."
Plate 33 in all editions of the *Guide*.

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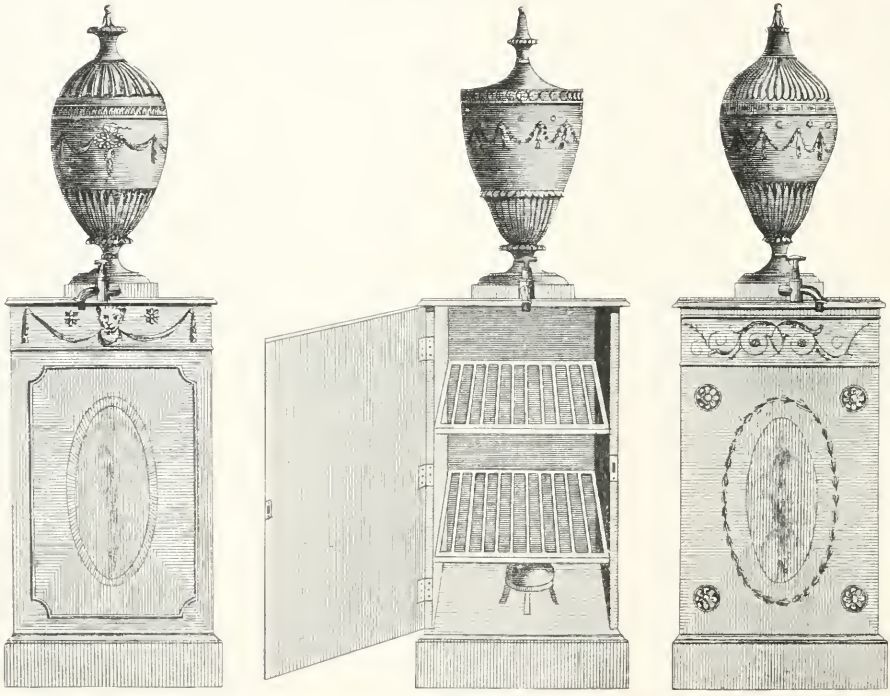
Hepplewhite's style falls so naturally into three divisions, the "Adam," "French," and true Hepplewhite—all of which will be considered at greater length at a subsequent stage—that it is instructive to examine how the manner of Robert Adam in particular dominates the style of "A. Hepplewhite & Co." at the outset of that firm's post-*Guide* career. Nothing could be more characteristic of the "Adelphi" than the two side-tables, Figs. 127 and 128, Plates 32 and 33 in the three editions of the *Guide*. In the first the legs are reeded, with a carved small "roping" on the central member. The frieze is carved with rosettes and swags, centred by a tablet with triglyphed pilasters, and carved with a typical Adam vase. The second example is on a more elaborate scale, and exhibits in even greater degree the influence of Robert Adam. The frieze is panelled with alternate rosettes and vases, the under rail being decorated with an "apron-piece" of semi-rosettes and inverted fuchsia flowers. The central tablet is the weakest part of the whole design. The fluted legs are so typically "Adam" in character as to suggest that George



Figs. 129, 130, and 131.
PEDESTALS AND VASES.
Plate 36 in all editions of the *Guide*.

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Hepplewhite must have been one—and not the least important—of the many cabinet-makers of the period who worked under the supervision of the brothers Adam. These side-tables, in conjunction with a pair of pedestals and urns, constituted the fashionable sideboard of the period, the self-contained single piece of furniture being left for the ingenuity of Thomas Sheraton to devise at a later date. The following reference to sideboards from the *Guide* may be of service in this connection :—

"Sideboard.

"The great utility of this piece of furniture has procured it a very general reception; and the conveniences it affords renders a dining-room incomplete without a sideboard. Of those with drawers, we have given two designs; the first, on Plate 29, shows the internal construction and conveniences of the drawers; the right-hand drawer has partitions for nine bottles, as shown in the plan; the partition is one inch and a half from the bottom; behind this is a place for cloths or napkins the whole depth of the drawer.

"Pedestals and Vases

are much used in spacious dining-rooms, where the last described kind of sideboards are chosen, at each end of which they are placed. One pedestal serves as a plate-warmer, being provided with racks and a stand for a heater, and is lined with strong tin; the other pedestal is used as a pot cupboard.

"The vases may be used to hold water for the use of the butler, or iced water for drinking, which is enclosed in an inner partition, the ice surrounding it; or may be used as knife-cases (see Plate 39), in which case they are made of wood, carved, painted or inlaid; if used for water, may be made of wood or of copper japanned. The height of the pedestal is the same as the sideboard, and 16 or 18 inches square; the height of the vase about 2 feet 3 inches."

Of these pedestals and vases, three examples from the *Guide* are reproduced in Figs. 129, 130, and 131. Although usually regarded as typically Hepplewhite in character, the influence of Robert Adam will be noticed. It is curious to observe how much of this style is altered in general appearance, by the substitution of inlay for carving, which shows how the distinctive style of Robert Adam depends more on the manner in which the decoration is applied than in the design of the ornament itself.

A comparison of the bookcase, Fig. 132, Plate 45 in the *Guide*, with Fig. 44, will show the general resemblance between much of the wall furniture of Adam and Hepplewhite. The reference from the *Guide* is as follows :—

"Plates 45, 46, 47, 48, show four different designs for Library Cases, which are usually made of the finest mahogany; the doors, of fine waved or curled wood,

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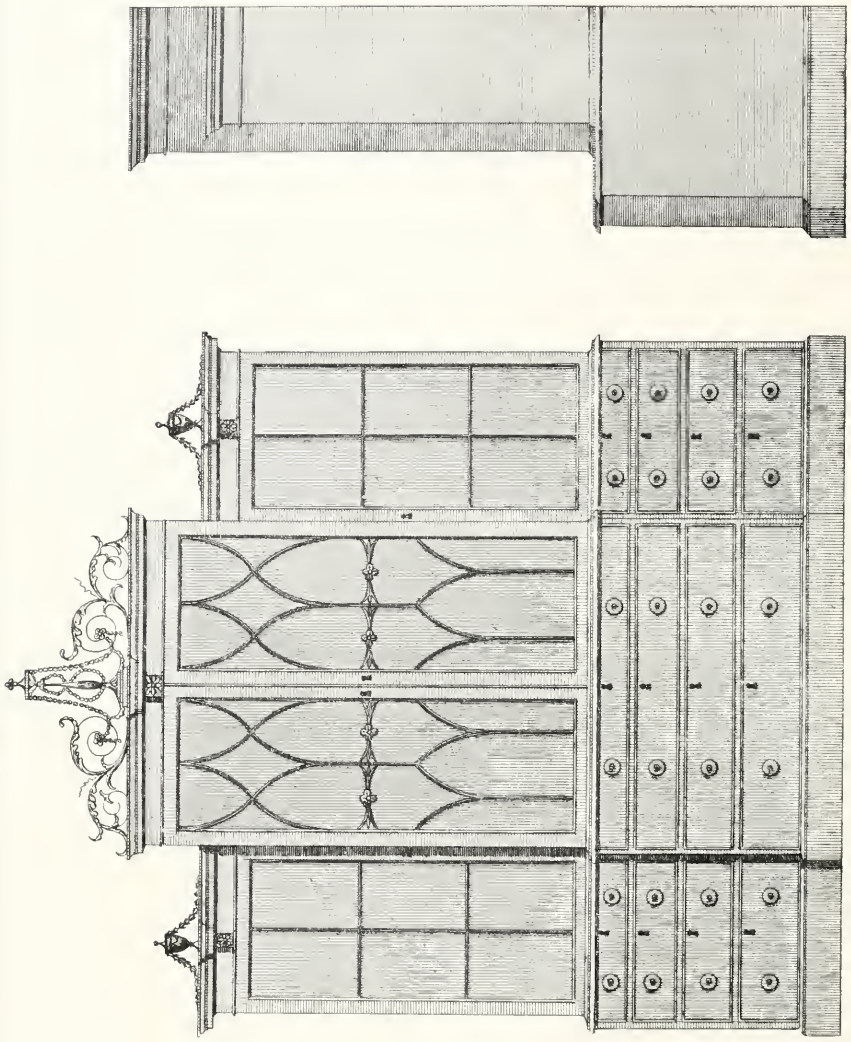

Fig. 132.
"LIBRARY CASE."
Plate 45 in all editions of the *Guide*.

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may be inlaid on the panels, &c., with various coloured woods. The ornamented sash-bars are intended to be of metal, which, painted of a light colour, or gilt, will produce a pleasing and lively effect."

The above reference to the making of the sash-bars in metal is one which will be further considered when the work of Thomas Sheraton is reviewed. It is obvious from even a casual study of the cabinet work of this period that this trellis work—which is one of the most important characteristics of eighteenth century cabinets and bookcases—was not made in metal, but in wood, and to an experienced cabinet-maker the process of manufacture is quite a simple one. To the novice, however—and in this category must be classed both Sheraton and Hepplewhite—it is difficult to imagine how the requisite degree of strength could be obtained in a mitred lattice of wood. As the whole process will be fully explained at a later stage, it would involve needless recapitulation to anticipate here, but it is necessary to point out that the firm of "A. Hepplewhite & Co." in 1788 were ignorant of the way to make these door-lattices of wood, and from the vagueness of the term "metal" they were equally ignorant of the method of making them at all. Possibly these designs were inserted as baits for wealthy persons, the idea being to consider the knotty problem of manufacture only when an order was obtained, when the assistance of the workshop could be requisitioned. One seeks in vain in the text to the *Guide* for any mention of the designs contained therein being made after pre-existing models—although there is some internal evidence, particularly in the case of chairs and settees, that such was the case—the only persistent claim being for the novelty of the patterns. Thus :—

"Preface.

"To unite elegance and utility, and blend the useful with the agreeable, has ever been considered a difficult but an honourable task. How far we have succeeded in the following work it becomes us not to say, but rather to leave it, with all due deference, to the determination of the Public at large. . . .

"To Residents in London, though our drawings are all new, yet, as we designedly followed the latest or most prevailing fashion only, purposely omitting such articles whose recommendation was mere novelty, and perhaps a violation of all established rule, the production of whim at the instance of caprice, whose appetite must ever suffer disappointment if any similar thing had been previously thought of; we say, having regularly avoided these fancies, and steadily adhered to such articles only as are of general use and service, one principal hope for favour and encouragement will be in having combined near three hundred different patterns for furniture in so small a space, and at so small a price."

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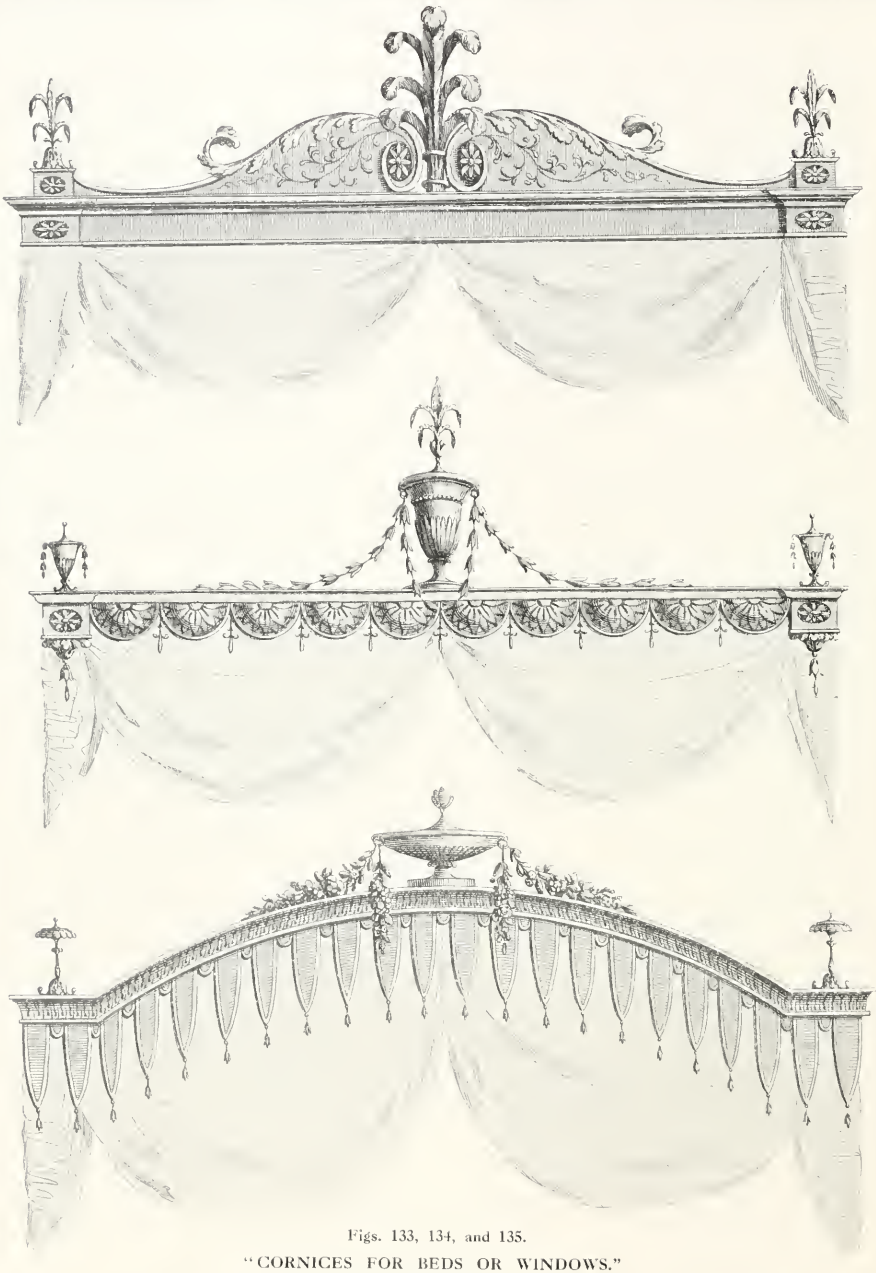

Figs. 133, 134, and 135.

"CORNICES FOR BEDS OR WINDOWS."

Plate 107 in all editions of the *Guide*.

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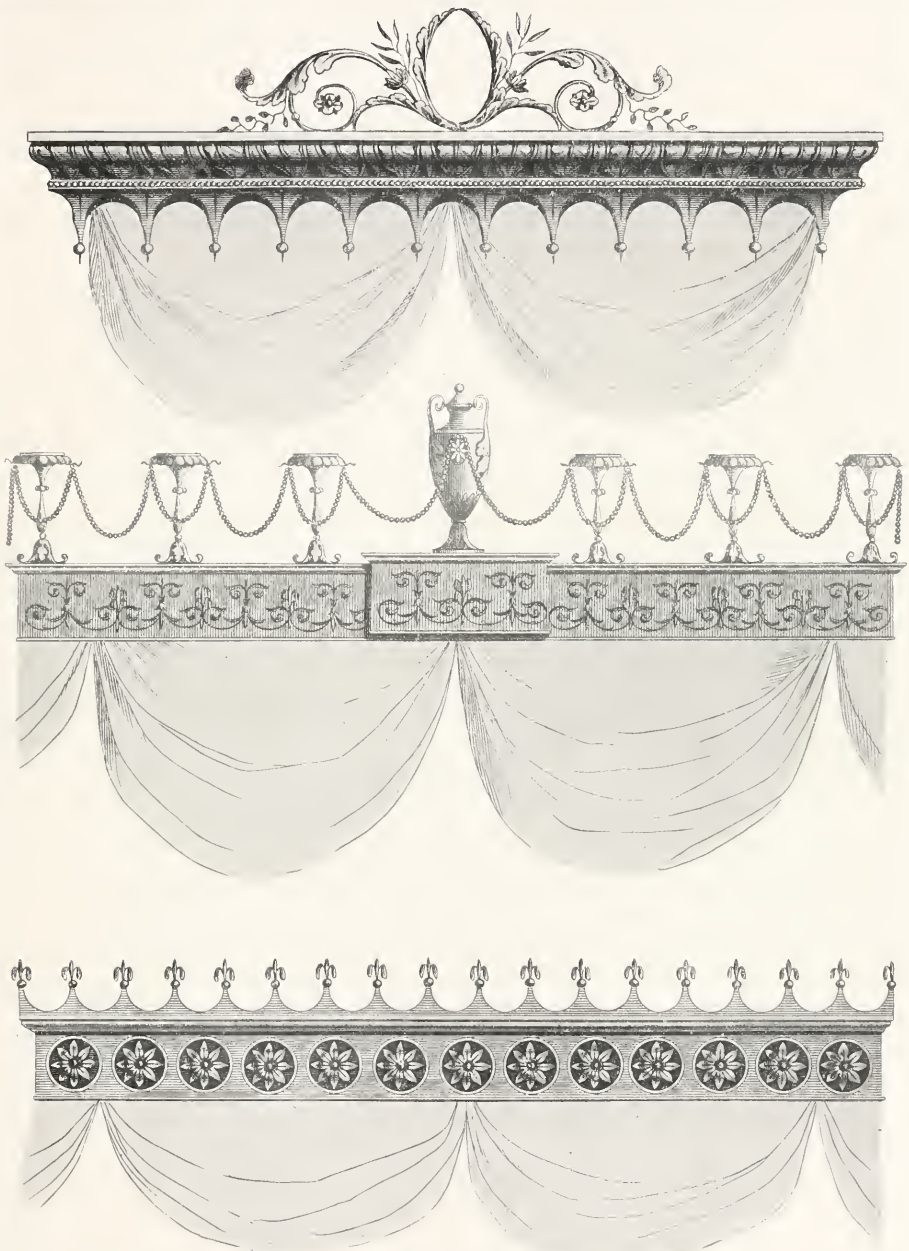

Figs. 136, 137, and 138.

"CORNICES FOR BEDS OR WINDOWS."

Plate 109 in all editions of the *Guide*.

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The latter part of the eighteenth century was essentially the age of elaborate window cornices and draperies, often carried to such an extreme as to be not only insanitary but unsightly. Six patterns from the *Guide* are reproduced in Figs. 133 to 138, all of which, with the exceptions of Figs. 134 and 137, being as characteristically Hepplewhite, as the two latter are typically Adam. Cornices of this kind were usually executed in wood and composition, and "japanned," *i.e.* painted with varnish colour, usually cream or light green, and picked out with gold. In some cases an attempt was made to match the shade of the curtain and valance fabrics, part of the wooden ornaments being carved to simulate drapery. It is an instance of the decadence of English furniture of the Adam and Hepplewhite periods, that deceits of this kind were not only extensively practised but even acclaimed as artistic triumphs.

Hepplewhite's *métier* was undoubtedly inlaid furniture, and the revival of marqueterie was, in all probability, due to his firm. Nothing could be finer than the commode,

Fig. 139.

"A COMMODE."

Plate 78 in all editions of the *Guide*.

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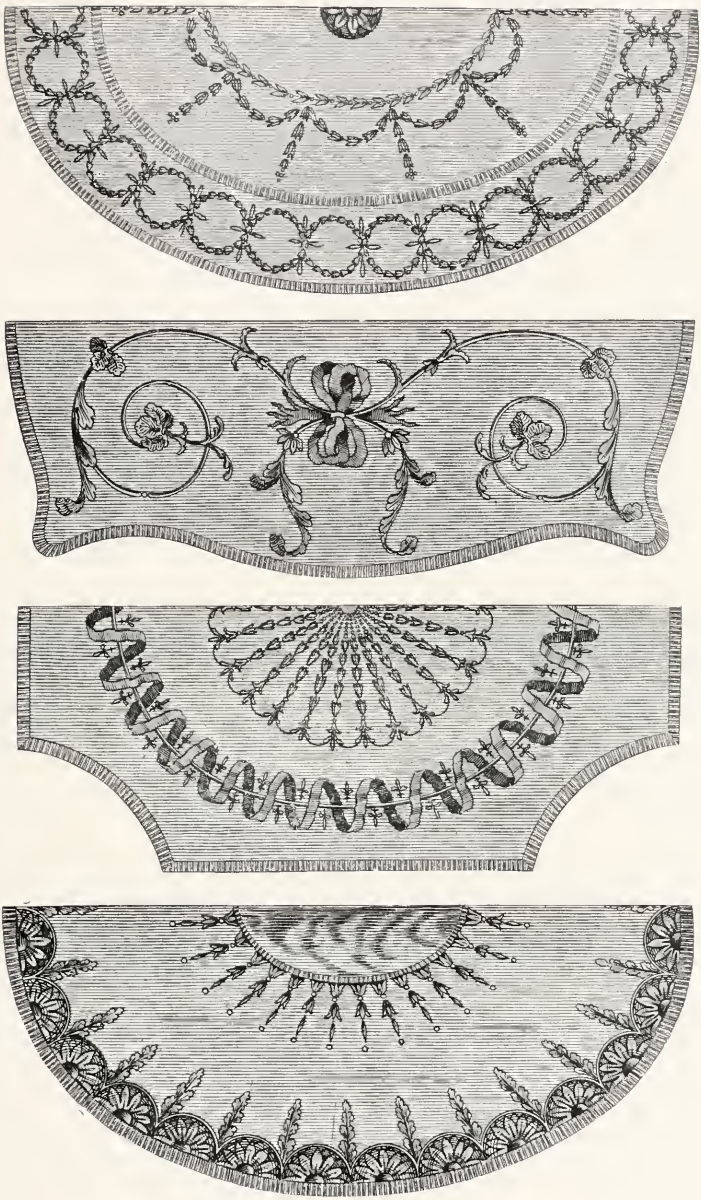

Figs. 140, 141, 142, 143.
TOPS FOR CARD TABLES.
Plate 61 in all editions of the *Guide*.

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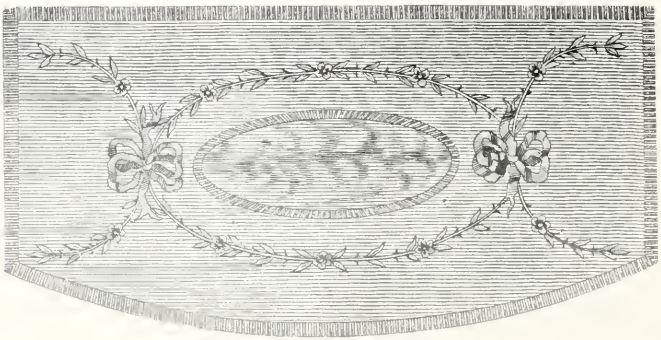

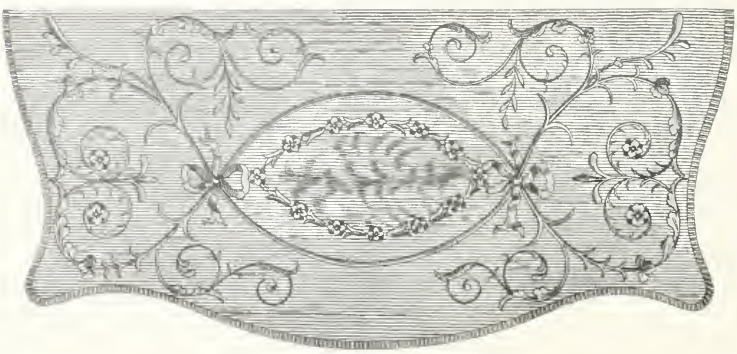

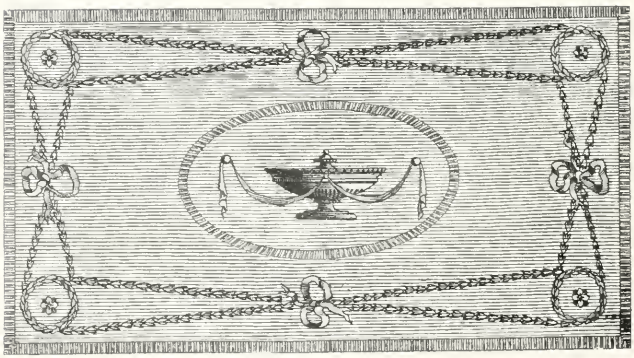

Figs. 144, 145, and 146.
"TOPS FOR DRESSING TABLES AND COMMODES."
Plate 78* in all editions of the *Guide*.

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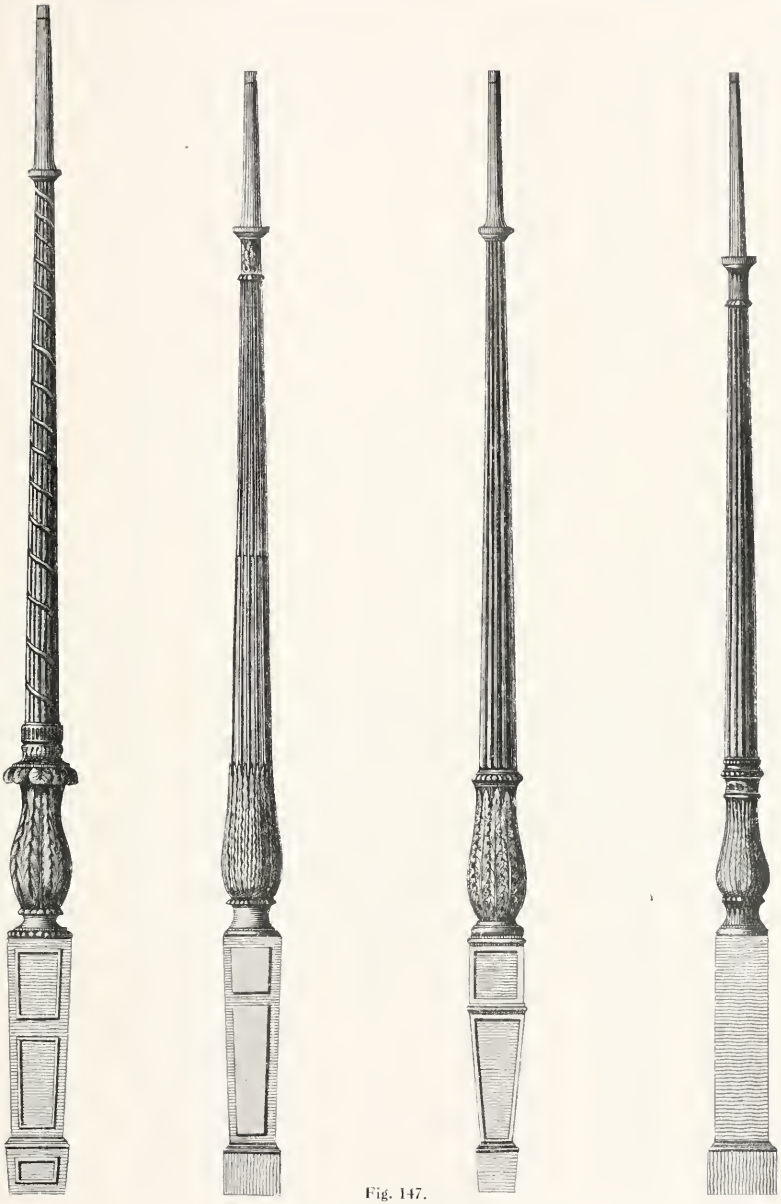

Fig. 147.

"BED PILLARS."

Plate 106 in all editions of the *Guide*.

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Fig. 139, a semi-circular piece made to stand between windows as an alternative to the pier table. The cut-out and shaped plinth is of the type known as the "French foot" at this period, and the inspiration of the term will be obvious when the French work of Hepplewhite is considered. The seven designs of inlaid tops for "dressing tables and commodes," Figs. 140 to 146, may be bracketed with Fig. 139 in point of excellence of design and purpose.

The four patterns of "Bed Pillars," Fig. 147, give Hepplewhite's ideas for the treatment of the "four-poster," although here he does not manifest any striking originality. It will be noticed that no provision is made in any of the designs for the housing or covering of the coach-screws or bolts by which the side framings were secured to the squares of the posts.

A good deal of mention has been made, in books dealing with the subject of English eighteenth century furniture, of the pattern known as "Rudd's Table." The design is reproduced here in Fig. 148. An almost identical design is shown on Plate 5 of the second edition of the *Cabinet-maker's London Book of Prices*, the work of Shearer, and the

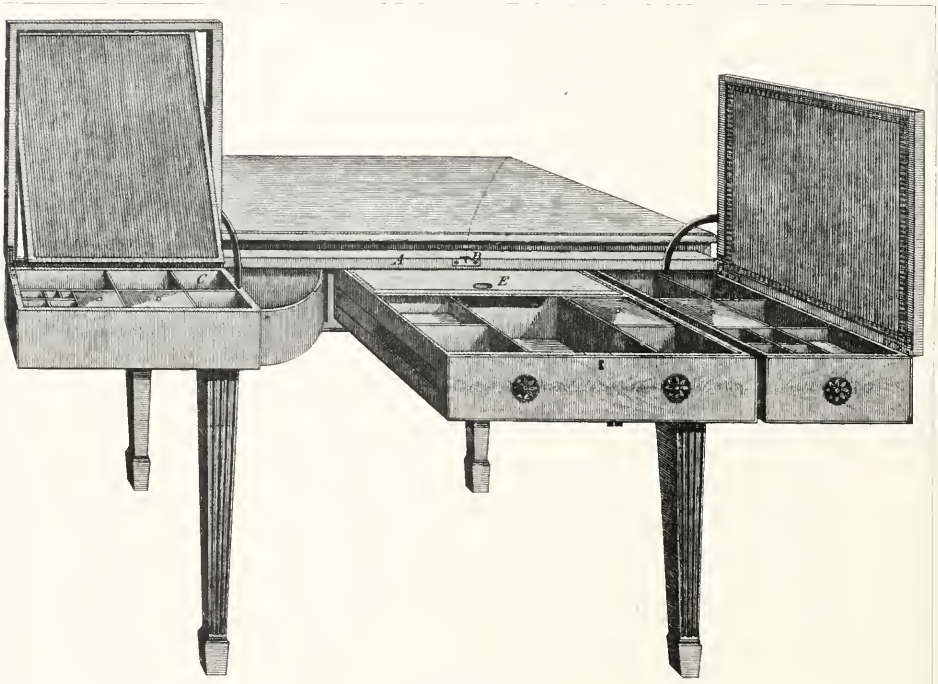

Fig. 148.
"RUDD'S TABLE."
Plate 79 in all editions of the *Guide*.

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following reference from the *Guide* indicates that the pattern was borrowed by both, being the common property of the whole trade at this period:—

"Rudd's Table or Reflecting Dressing Table. This is the most complete Dressing Table made, possessing every convenience which can be wanted, or mechanism and ingenuity supply. It derives its name from a once popular character, for whom it is reported it was first invented."

The above suggests a date considerably before 1788 for the origin of the pattern. It is included in all three editions of the *Guide*.

So far, the intention has been to shortly review the *Cabinet-maker and Upholsterer's Guide* in the same manner as was pursued in the case of Chippendale's *Director* in the second volume. The illustrations have been culled solely from the *Guide* itself, the idea being to offer some substantial basis for the system of classification to be adopted in subsequent chapters, where it is proposed to further consider the patterns of Hepplewhite as illustrated in the *Guide*, side by side with photographic reproductions from actual models of the period, and to see whether certain rules cannot be established by which the cabinet and chair work of Hepplewhite may be distinguished from that of his trade rivals, and of Thomas Sheraton who succeeded him, as the last of the great designers of English furniture during the eighteenth century.

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Chapter IX.

Furniture of the Hepplewhite Period—1780-1792.

IT is comparatively easy to differentiate between the style of the furniture designs of "A. Hepplewhite & Co." as illustrated in the *Guide* and that of Thomas Sheraton as expounded in the *Drawing Book*. The distinction, in the greater majority of instances, is so wide as to need little or no explanation. In seeking for guiding principles to enable us to distinguish between the work of the Hepplewhite school—from about 1780 to 1792—and that of the followers of Sheraton—from about 1790 until the close of the eighteenth century—the problem becomes much more complicated, for many reasons. In the first place, the firm of Hepplewhite & Co., if not the founder himself, were designers and makers of furniture, each in a separate connection. We can only gauge the scope of what is known as the Hepplewhite style by the measure of the *Cabinet-maker and Upholsterer's Guide* in the restricted sense of the term, but it will be found more convenient to enlarge the sphere, and to include both the productions of the firm of Hepplewhite and of the cabinet-makers of the period who followed in their train under the one generic title. This method is not really so comprehensive as would at first sight appear. The style of Hepplewhite could not have been an accomplished fact in 1788—the date of publication of the first edition of the *Guide*—in fact it would be more correct to say that the true style is not expounded in this book at all. We have seen that repeated references are made, in the accompanying text to the *Guide* illustrations, to the novelty and experimental character of many of the designs; and the conclusion is irresistible that the firm of Hepplewhite, when considering the publication of this trade catalogue—it is nothing less—came to the conclusion that the patterns made in the ordinary way were too hackneyed and lacking in novelty for publication in collected form. The result was that they gave to the furnishing world of the later eighteenth century many untried designs, original, if not often ludicrous in conception, and in the greater number of instances, impracticable in character. Had it been possible to have photographed the furniture actually made in Hepplewhite's workshops and to have compared these with the *Guide* designs, it would probably have been found that the resemblance between the two would have been exceedingly slight. In the absence, however, of authenticated Hepplewhite furniture, we are forced, in some measure, to re-create the style, or to establish new boundaries, and it will be better therefore, and

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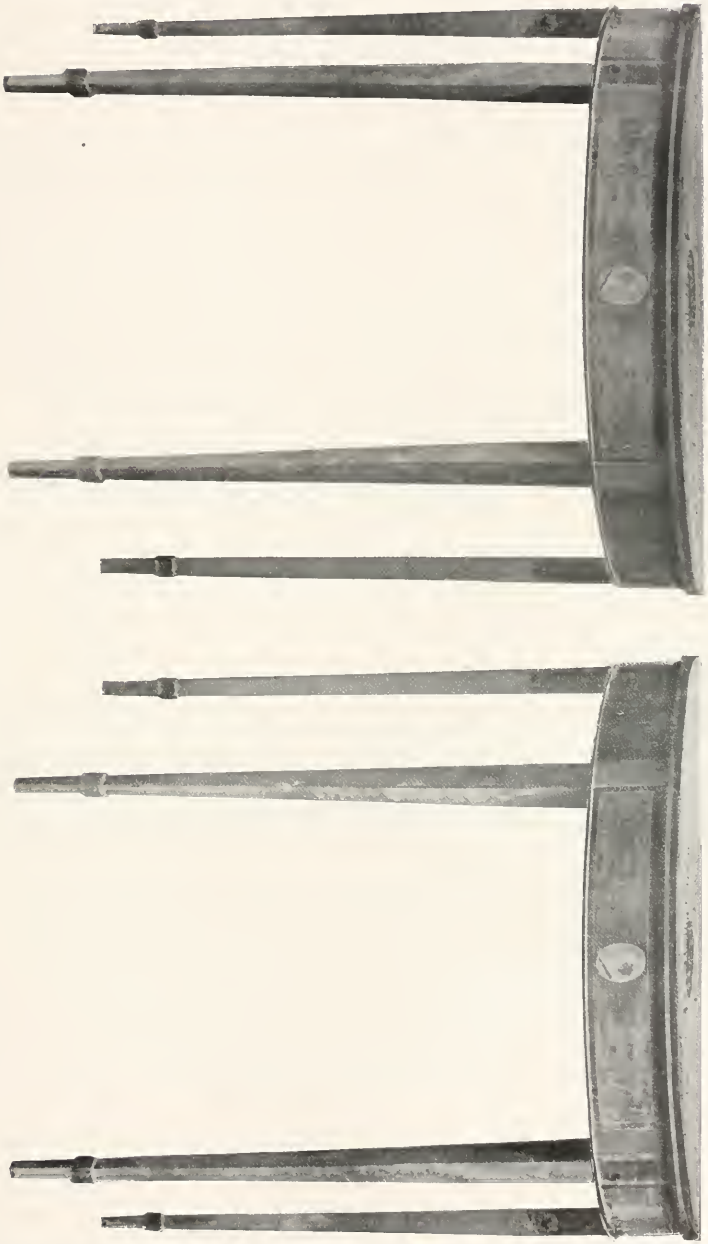

Figs. 149 and 150.
PAINTED SATINWOOD TABLES.
In the possession of C. J. Charles, Esq.
2 ft. 8 ins. wide × 1 ft. 6 ins. deep × 2 ft. 9 ins. high.
Date about 1780.

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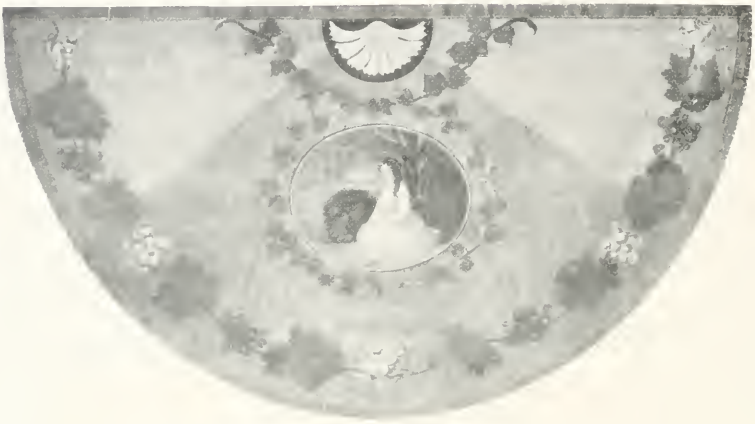

Figs. 151 and 152.
THE TOPS OF THE SATINWOOD TABLES,
Figs. 149 and 150.

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Fig. 153.
INLAID SATINWOOD TABLE.
3 ft. 9 ins. wide × 1 ft. 8½ ins. deep × 2 ft. 9 ins. high.
Date about 1785.

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less misleading, to refer to the examples illustrated in this chapter as being the work of cabinet-makers from 1780 to 1792, whose title of the Hepplewhite school does not so much imply that they followed the lead of Hepplewhite & Co. as that they collectively assisted to establish what is here referred to as the "Hepplewhite style." With this preamble, we can turn to the consideration of the furniture of the Hepplewhite school without the reader falling into the error of imagining that each example illustrated in the following pages represents actual work of the firm of "A. Hepplewhite & Co."

Although mahogany was still used to a great extent until the close of the eighteenth century, the fashionable taste of this period was for the lighter woods, satinwood, sycamore, and chestnut, polished in their natural colours, or, in the case of sycamore, stained with water to which oxide of iron was added, to produce what was variously known as "eyre-wood" or "hare-wood." Beech was also largely employed, principally for chairs, where a japanned or painted surface was required. Roughly summarised, the era of Chippendale may be described as an age of carved and fretted ornament, that of Hepplewhite as one of painting, and the period of Sheraton as one of inlay. The *Guide* itself was probably responsible for the substitution of painted decoration for

Fig. 154.
SATINWOOD SIDE TABLES.
3 ft. 9 ins. wide × 1 ft. 10 ins. deep × 2 ft. 6 ins. high.
Date about 1790.

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carved ornament, and Sheraton also adopted the manner, preferring, however, an inlay of coloured woods as being of more permanent a nature than paint.

The satinwood used at this period was almost exclusively of the East Indian variety, pale lemon-yellow in colour and comparatively free from figure. To relieve the monotony of large surfaces, painted decoration, usually of small medallions surrounded with flowers and ribbons, was employed. Figs. 149 and 150 are examples of this work, Figs. 151 and 152 showing the tops, decorated in the manner of Angelica Kauffman, Cipriani, and Zucchi. The top and friezes are edged with tulip wood, crossbanded, inside of which, on the former, are painted borders of grapes and vine leaves. The veneer of the tops is "feathered" in three pieces radiating from the centre of the back, to enhance the appearance of the wood.

Figs. 153 and 154 show the alternative method of inlaying instead of painting. In the first the top is veneered with East India satinwood, in radiating fans with outer segments of rosewood crossbanded, and bordered with "feathered" tulip veneer. The legs are edged with small chequered lines of holly and ebony, and the "squares" on the

Fig. 155.
PAINTED AND DECORATED SIDE TABLE.
3 ft. 10 ins. wide × 1 ft. 7 ins. deep × 2 ft. 7 ins. high.
Date about 1790.

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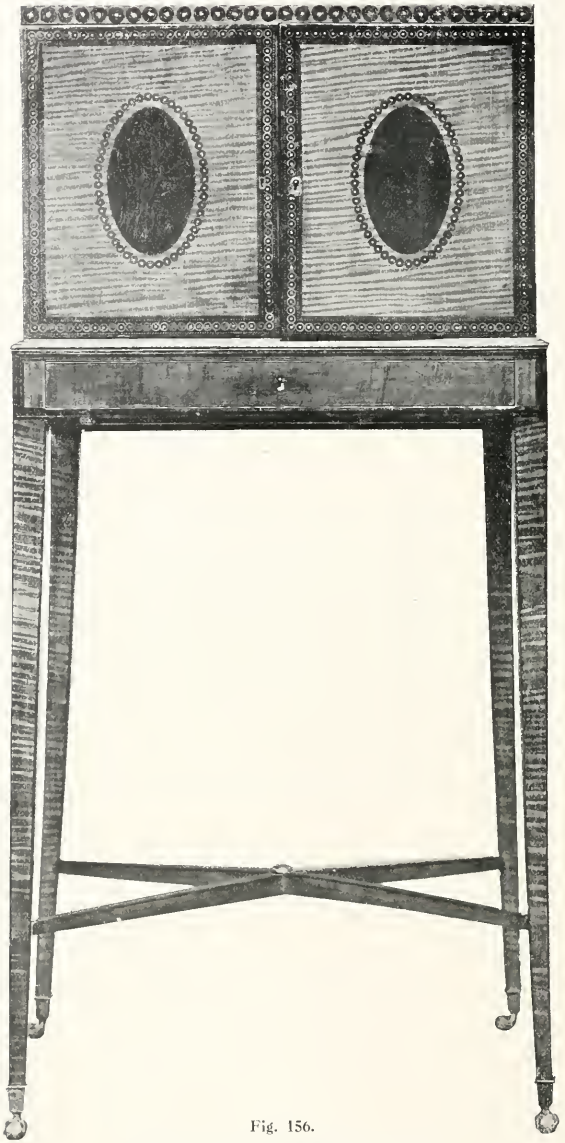

Fig. 156.

CABINET OF SYCAMORE. (Inlaid.)

In the Victoria and Albert Museum.

1 ft. $6\frac{3}{4}$ ins. wide × 3 ft. $4\frac{1}{2}$ ins. high × 1 ft. $3\frac{1}{2}$ ins. deep.

Date about 1780-90.

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frieze are inlaid with small oval fans. The tapered legs finish in the peculiar "collared" toe which is characteristic of the Hepplewhite school.

In Fig. 154 the satinwood is very pale in colour, and is banded with kingwood. The central tablet is inlaid with scroll marqueterie of the same wood, and the semi-oval in the back of each top is of holly in a ground of rosewood. Fig. 155 is another of the side or pier tables of this date, of beech, japanned and decorated. The edges of the top and the frieze are banded with rosewood, and the legs, framings, and top are decorated with painted sprigs of ivy leaves. Although Chippendale's style in furniture had quite gone out of fashion at this date, the flamboyant mirrors which are so associated with his name still remained in favour until nearly the close of the century. In the usual arrangement of the apartments where these side tables were placed, the carved gilded mirror-frames were generally used for the embellishment of the wall above.

Fig. 156 is the well-known specimen cabinet from the Victoria and Albert Museum, which shows the dainty character of much of the furniture of the Hepplewhite period. The whole of the surfaces are veneered with sycamore, with oval panels of thuja in the doors, on the sides, and in the centre of the top. Each of these panels is surrounded by a band formed of small "roundels" of ebony, ringed and dotted with holly. The same ornament is used for the banding of the doors, sides, and top, and on a small frieze above the door is another row of larger roundels in patera form. The legs of the stand are tapered on the inside edges only—a detail peculiar to the Hepplewhite school—and have also a slight outward splay which gives a very satisfactory appearance of stability and

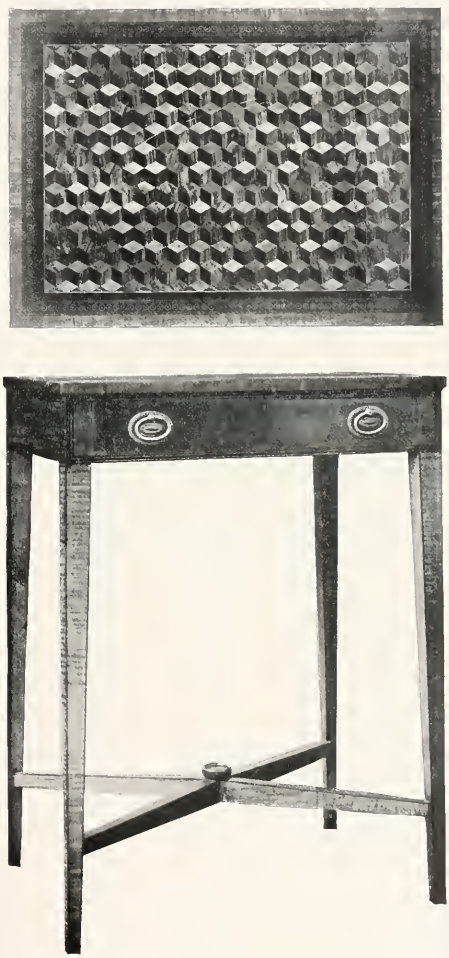

Fig. 157.
INLAID HAREWOOD TABLE.
2 ft. 5 ins. high × 1 ft. 10 ins. wide × 1 ft. 4 ins. deep.
Date about 1780–90.

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grace to the cabinet. The legs finish in small castors, and are tied together with a cross stretcher rail, tapered on the upper side only, and centred with a turned button. The drawer is banded to form a panel running right across the legs, the opening line of the drawer being concealed. The whole piece is well designed, although the workmanship, especially the cutting of the inlaid "roundels," leaves something to be desired. It must be said, however, that to accurately space these out to fill the required space exactly, especially in the band surrounding the central ovals, demands great nicety and precision of workmanship, as the running guilloche effect of the "roundels" is destroyed if they are not placed exactly together. There is no excuse,

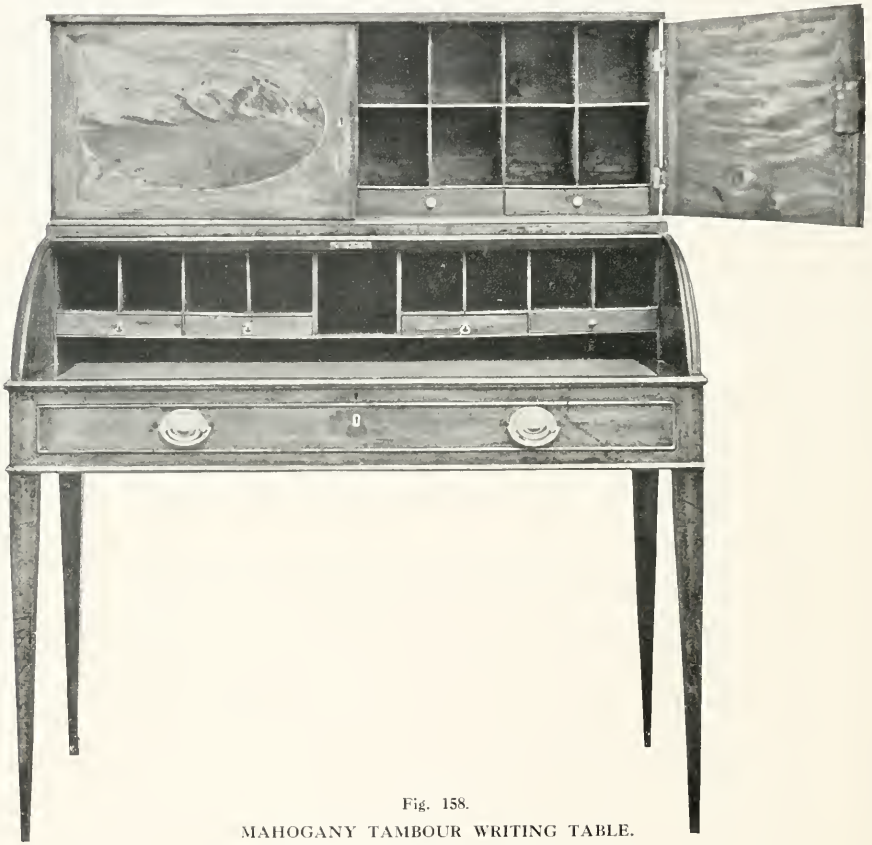

Fig. 158.

MAHOGANY TAMBOUR WRITING TABLE.

In the possession of Messrs. Gill and Reigate.

3 ft. 9 ins. wide × 1 ft. 9 ins. deep × 4 ft. 5 ins. total height.

Date about 1790.

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however, for inlaying many of the holly dots out of the centre. Fig. 157 is a small occasional table in the same fashion, veneered with stained sycamore, the top inlaid with a parqueterie of small cubes and banded with similar inlay of "roundels" to the previous example.

The pull-over tambour writing-table—usually known as a "reed-top"—was a familiar article of furniture at this date. The tambour was formed of moulded beads, glued on the backs to stout canvas, in the same way as modern "roll-top" desks are made. This method had the advantage over the solid cylinder form in requiring little space at the back, the tambour top, when opened, dropping behind the pigeon-holes

Fig. 159.
MAHOGANY TAMBOUR WRITING TABLE.
3 ft. 7 ins. wide × 1 ft. 7 ins. deep × 3 ft. 2 ins. high.
Date about 1790.

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in a straight line. Segmental guides, or "runners," were faced inside the quarter-circular sides to keep the tambour rigid when it was pulled over.

Fig. 158 is a mahogany table of this kind, of about 1780–90, the veneer highly bleached —probably by the action of time and sunlight. The doors are flush veneered, with ovals and mitred surrounds, and banded with holly lines. Behind the tambour are four drawers, three of which have the original handles, eight pigeon-holes, and a small central cupboard, the door of which is now missing. The lower drawer is cock-beaded. Behind the upper doors are sixteen pigeon-holes and four drawers.

Fig. 160.
MAHOGANY CYLINDER SECRETAIRE TABLE.
Inlaid with marqueterie.
3 ft. wide × 3 ft. 6. ins. high × 1 ft. 9 ins. deep.
Date about 1785-92.

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Fig. 159 is another of these tambour writing-tables, of mahogany, with the fronts of the drawers veneered with satinwood. The inside is fitted with eight pigeon-holes, each with an arched "curtain-piece" and six flat drawers below. The writing-bed is lipped and lined with "paste-grain" morocco and fitted with a pull-up slope, strutted underneath. The lower drawer is cock-beaded, the sides being panelled in the same way to correspond.

The solid cylinder-fall bureau or secretaire is of French inception, and is a somewhat rare form in English furniture of this date. Fig. 160 is veneered with mahogany, and inlaid with holly lines and marqueterie of satinwood. The writing-slab is attached at the back to the cylinder, and when pulled forward opens the fall. The top drawer also opens to support the writing-bed. Inside is a sliding trap, made to push back, fitted with a rising desk slope lined with leather, and a well for papers underneath. Behind the cylinder are six drawers, three pigeon-holes, and racks for pens on either side. The general character of the marqueterie is characteristic of the Hepplewhite school, and the same tapered leg with square collar as in Figs. 149 and 150 will be noticed.

Another typical Hepplewhite detail which now claims our attention is the hollowed-out bracket-plinth, or "French foot," as it is generally termed. The next six examples all have this feature. Fig. 161 is a china-case in two sections, each of the same depth—an unusual feature at this period, cabinets being usually made in book-case form, with the lower carcase projecting from three to six inches beyond the one above. Fig. 162

Fig. 161.
MAHOGANY CHINA CASE.
7 ft. 1 in. high × 3 ft. 6 ins. wide × 1 ft. 1 in. deep.
Date about 1790.

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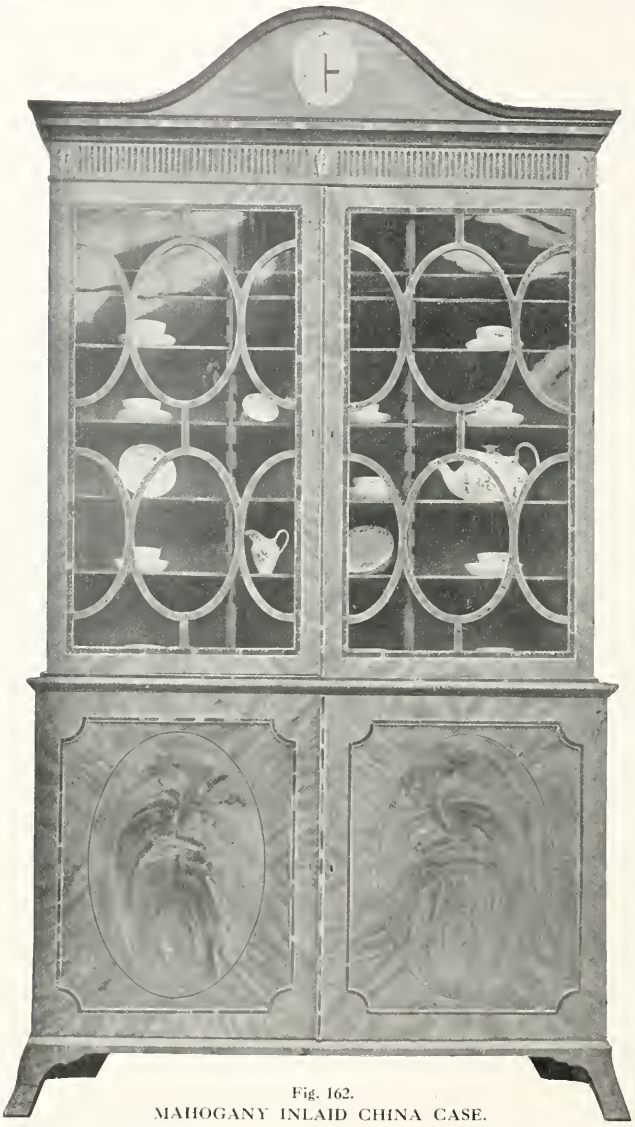

Fig. 162.
MAHOGANY INLAID CHINA CASE.

Upper part.	Lower part.
3 ft. 9½ ins. wide.	3 ft. 11 ins. wide.
3 ft. 10¼ ins. high (without pediment).	3 ft. 0 ins. high.
11 ins. deep.	1 ft. 4½ ins. deep.

Pediment 9½ ins. high.
Date about 1790.

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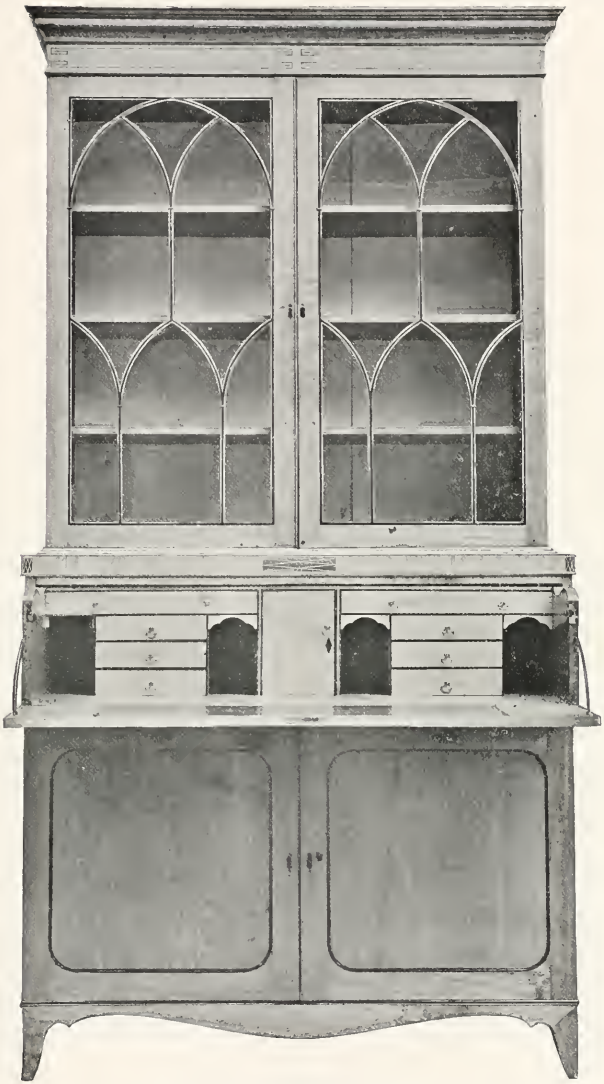

Fig. 163.

MAHOGANY SECRETAIRE BOOKCASE.

Upper part.	Lower part.
Height, 4 ft. 0 ins.	Height, 3 ft. 6 ins.
Width, 3 ft. 7½ ins.	Width, 3 ft. 9¼ ins.
Depth, 1 ft. 1¼ ins.	Depth, 1 ft. 8½ ins.

Date about 1790.

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is a case of highly bleached mahogany, the upper doors latticed with flat fillets veneered with rosewood cross-banded and edged with holly lines. The stiles and rails of the lower doors are finished to correspond, and in the panels are ovals of beautifully figured curl mahogany, with feathered surrounds of the same wood. The pediment is inlaid with a curious central device of a Crusader's cross surrounded by a laurelled band, in satinwood, holly, and ebony, and the dentil-member of the cornice is veneered with cross-banded mahogany, with eight small squares of satinwood inlaid at intervals. The frieze is decorated with carved flutes and inlaid shells of holly.

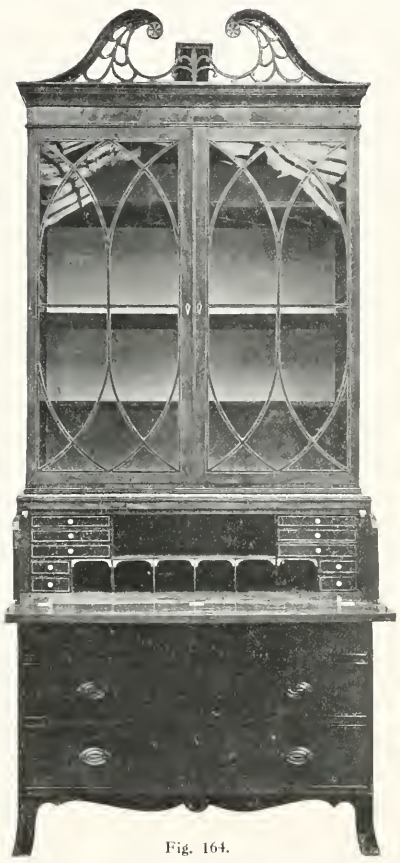

Fig. 164.
MAHOGANY SECRETARY BOOKCASE.
7 ft. 7 ins. high × 3 ft. 5 ins. wide × 1 ft. 7½ ins. extreme depth.
Date about 1790.

With the introduction of the flat veneered tracery for doors, in place of the usual astragal mouldings, a time-saving, but very reprehensible practice came into vogue of cementing the lattice-work to the glass instead of "ribbing" each panel. In this cabinet each of the upper doors is glazed with one complete panel, the strength of the tracery depending solely on the adhesive which has been used to affix it to the glass. The fitting of the upper carcase indicates that the piece was made specifically to act as a china cabinet, probably to contain the new productions of the Minton potteries at Stoke, which were established at this period.

Fig. 163 is a secretaire bookcase of light mahogany, with the top of the lower carcase veneered with satinwood inlaid with rectangular panels of rosewood on the edges. It is inlaid with purple wood lines in a key pattern, and the lattice-work of the upper doors is flat as in the previous example, formed of one ebony and two hollow lines. In this specimen, however, the lattice is "ribbed" behind, with the glass cut into each panel and secured with glaziers' putty. The secretaire is fitted with two long and six smaller drawers, with dividing partitions of purple wood one-eighth of an inch in thickness. Four pigeon-holes and a small central cupboard, the door of which is edged

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with purple lines to match the drawers, complete the fittings of the interior. The flap is lined with dark green paste-grain morocco leather. The framings of both upper and lower doors are square-shouldered, without veneering, although the cut-out plinth is faced and mitred on the corners in somewhat unusual fashion.

Fig. 164 has the fashionable fret-cut pediment of 1780, although the unusual akroter has been omitted. The moulded centres of pediments of this type were intended to support busts, a fashion which had survived from the era of the early "architects' furniture" referred to in the second volume. This bookcase is a good example of the well-designed furniture of this period. The design of the lattice-work in the upper doors is simple and harmonious, this pattern of intersecting ovals being a favourite one with the cabinet-makers of both the Hepplewhite and Sheraton periods. The "French foot" is, in fact, the only detail which indicates the former school.

Fig. 165 is a good example of the serpentine-fronted chests of drawers of the period,

Fig. 165.
MAHOGANY CHEST OF DRAWERS.
3 ft. 6 ins. wide · 3 ft. 3 ins. high × 1 ft. 5½ ins. deep.
Date about 1785.

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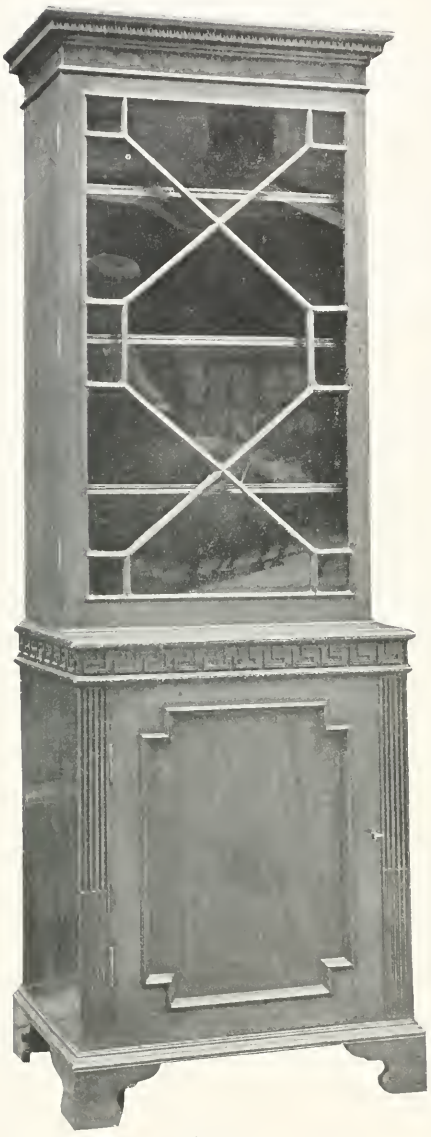

Fig. 166.
MAHOGANY BOOKCASE. (One of a pair.)
In the possession of Messrs. Colling & Young.
6 ft. 4 ins. high (lower carcase, 2 ft. 8 ins. high).
1 ft. 11½ ins. wide.
Depth: lower part, 1 ft. 5 ins.; upper part, 1 ft. 0¾ in.
Date about 1780.

well made in every respect, and with the veneer carefully selected, pieced in the centre of each drawer front, and "feathered" to obtain the utmost richness of effect and to preserve the entire curl figure as in the log. The edges of the drawer rails are cross-banded with the same wood, the plinth being finished in like manner. The handles are of the earlier fashion, although these flamboyant patterns remained in favour with many cabinet-makers until the close of the eighteenth century. The bow-front was rarely used for chests of drawers, as compared with the serpentine form, the latter being better adapted to show the figure of the wood to advantage, and to provide a more interesting play of light and shade.

Fig. 166 reverts to the classical manner popularised by Robert Adam, although there is little or no suggestion of his influence in this example. This bookcase is one of a pair, and is peculiar in construction in several respects. The framing mouldings of both upper and lower doors are "bolected," *i.e.* rebated on to, and projecting above the faces of the styles and rails. The cornice is decorated with small flutes in place of the usual dentils, and the frieze of the lower carcase is enriched with a key-pattern fret lattice. The side pilasters are fluted and reeded, and the cupboard in the lower part is fitted with a central shelf. The back and shelves are of deal—the latter faced with one-inch strips moulded on the edges—mahogany being still a valuable wood at this period.

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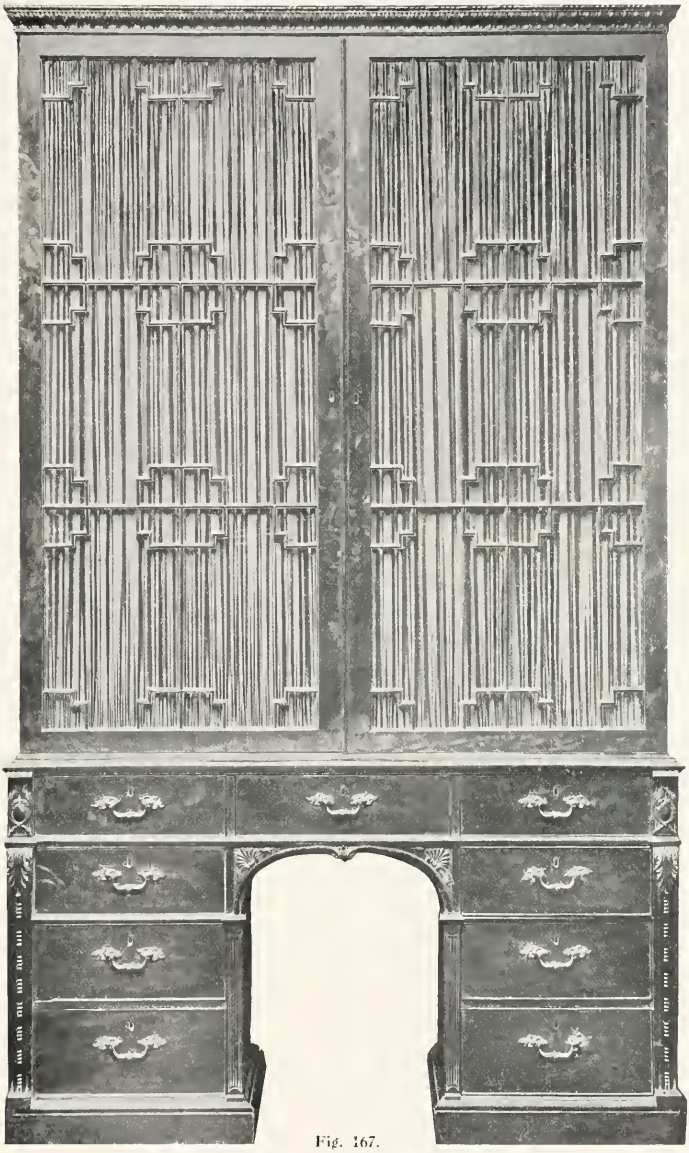

Fig. 167.

MAHOGANY SECRETAIRE BOOKCASE.

8 ft. 3½ ins. high × 4 ft. 11 ins. wide × 1 ft. 5½ ins. deep.

Lower carcase, 2 ft. 9 ins. high.

Date about 1780.

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Fig. 168.
MAHOGANY BOOKCASE.
8 ft. 2 ins. high × 4 ft. 7½ ins. wide.
Lower carcase, 1 ft. 9 ins. deep. Upper carcase, 11½ ins. deep.
Date about 1780.

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Fig. 167 is a secretaire bookcase of lofty proportions, the lower part very reminiscent of much of the later work of Thomas Chippendale, executed under the supervision of Robert Adam, as at Nostell Priory. The handles are also of the early fashion, but the general proportions and much of the detail suggest a date not before 1780 for the piece.

Fig. 168 is of about the same date, and is a good example of the simple furniture of this period. Fig. 169, although of earlier type, illustrates how the traditions of the earlier Chippendale period were perpetuated until almost the close of the eighteenth century. This bureau bookcase was made in 1787, and a careful examination will reveal many details which suggest this late date, such as the detail of the cornice, the absence of the usual astragal dividing the frieze from the upper doors, the small chamfer on the outer edges of the framings of the upper doors which give them a peculiar appearance of projection, and the lower drawers, the fronts moulded with ovolo beads on the edges, and the somewhat stilted shaping of the cut-out bracket plinth. The handles with engraved back plates and the escutcheons to match are, of course, of even older type than the design itself, but the vogue for handles of this kind remained

Fig. 169.

MAHOGANY BUREAU BOOKCASE.

7 ft. 4 ins. high × 3 ft. 6 ins. wide.

Lower part, 1 ft. 10½ ins. deep. Upper part, 11½ ins. deep.

Date 1787.

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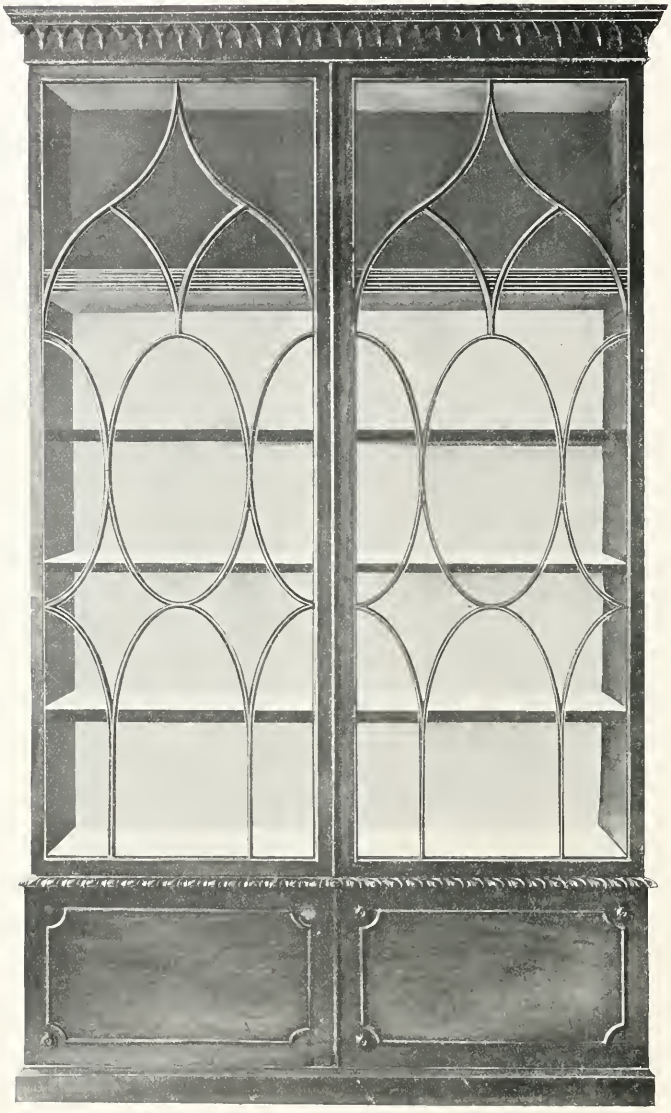

Fig. 170.

MAHOGANY CHINA CABINET.

In the possession of Messrs. W. & E. Thornton-Smith.

7 ft. 11 ins. high × 4 ft. 8 ins. wide × 1 ft. 3 ins. deep.

Date about 1785-90.

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in force, especially in country districts, until the very close of the eighteenth century.

Fig. 170 is another piece of about the same date and with similar composite character. The fashion of the "pear-drop" cornice, *i.e.* where the hollow under the fillet was cut out in a series of arches, with small turned

Fig. 171.
MAHOGANY CORNER CUPBOARD.
5 ft. 9 ins. high × 3 ft. 7 ins. wide across front.
Date about 1780-90.

Fig. 172.
MAHOGANY CHINA CASE.
6 ft. 3 ins. high × 1 ft. 8 ins. wide × 11½ ins. deep.
Date about 1780-90.

members—usually of bone and ivory—under, appears to have originated, as a usual detail, about 1775–80, and became a favourite one with the Sheraton school. When this feature is introduced, both the fillet and the ogee above are usually kept very small, the hollow under often appearing disproportionately large. In this china cabinet not only the cornice but also the tracery of the door and the astragal on the panels below with segmental rosetted corners are late details, contrasting somewhat curiously with the typical Chippendale gadroon moulding above.

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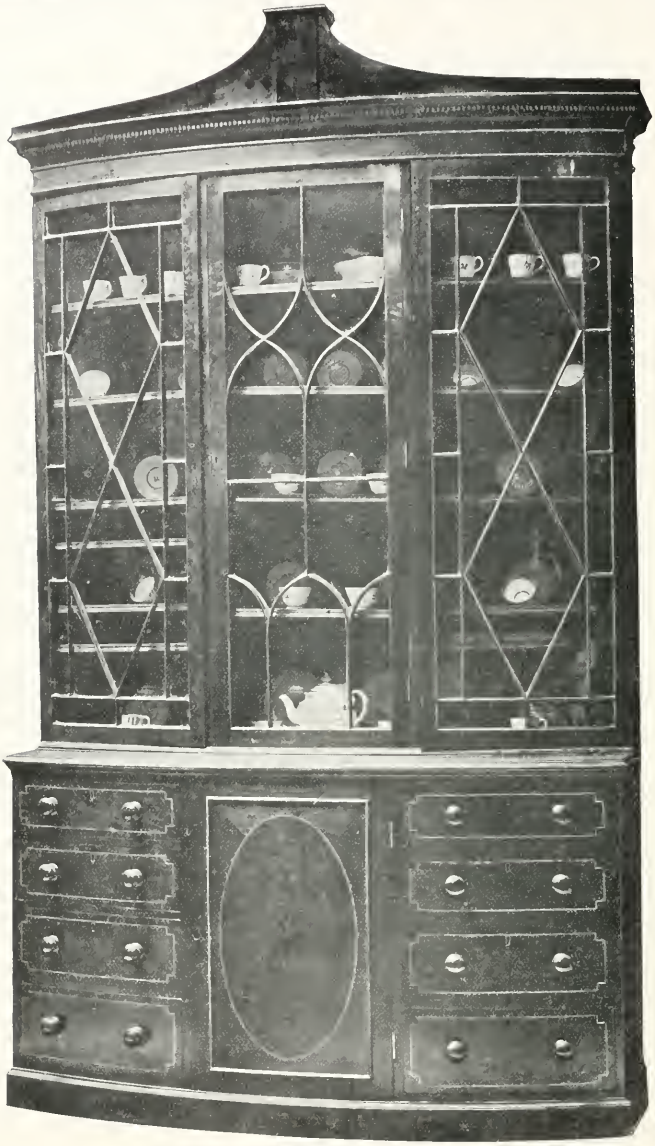

Fig. 173.
MAHOGANY CHINA CASE.
8 ft. 11 ins. high × 5 ft. 1 in. wide.
Upper part, 1 ft. 1 in. deep. Lower part, 1 ft. 8 ins. deep.
Date about 1780-1800.

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The corner cabinet, Fig. 171, illustrates another favourite piece with country makers at this date, and may be bracketed with Fig. 169 as showing the persistence of early type. In these late corner cabinets the shelves are nearly always shaped on the fronts, and in the original instance it was the custom to paint the interior in a shade of cream or pale green, the edges of the shelves being lined with gold.

Fig. 172 is one of the tall, slender china cabinets of this date, usually made in pairs to fit recesses on either side of a fireplace.

Fig. 173 is a fine china case of about this date, where the fronts of both upper and lower carcases are bowed in a peculiarly flat sweep which was characteristic of the early Sheraton period rather than that of Hepplewhite. The tracery of the upper doors is formed of mouldings of double-hollow section instead of the usual astragal, and the reason for the flat character of the bow front is apparent when it is pointed out that each door is quite flat, those on the sides being hinged at a slight angle to follow the sweep of the front. The turned knobs are, of course, modern additions, and the incongruity of their appearance here demonstrates the decorative value of the usual brass ring handles of this period.

Mention has been made of the homogeneous character of much of the furniture of this period, which permits of its being resolved into some six or eight fixed types. Exceptions must be made in favour of furniture of the elaborate kind, and also of the productions of some of the minor craftsmen, such as Seddon and Shearer. The latter,

Fig. 174.

MAHOGANY CABINET.

Lower part: 3 ft. 10 ins. wide × 2 ft. 8 ins. high × 1 ft. 11 ins. deep.
Upper part: 3 ft. 8½ ins. wide × 4 ft. 6 ins. high × 1 ft. 3 ins. deep.
Pediment, 10½ ins. high.
Date about 1780-90.

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Fig. 175.

MAHOGANY TABLE.

4 ft. 0 ins. long × 1 ft. 11 ins. deep × 2 ft. 8½ ins. high.

Date about 1775-80.

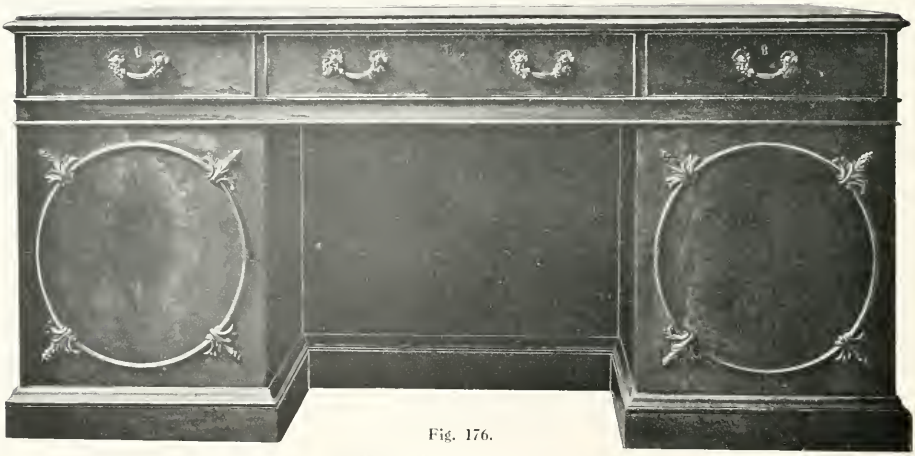

Fig. 176.

MAHOGANY SIDEBOARD.

6 ft. 0 ins. long × 2 ft. 9 ins. high × 1 ft. 10 ins. deep.

Date about 1770-80.

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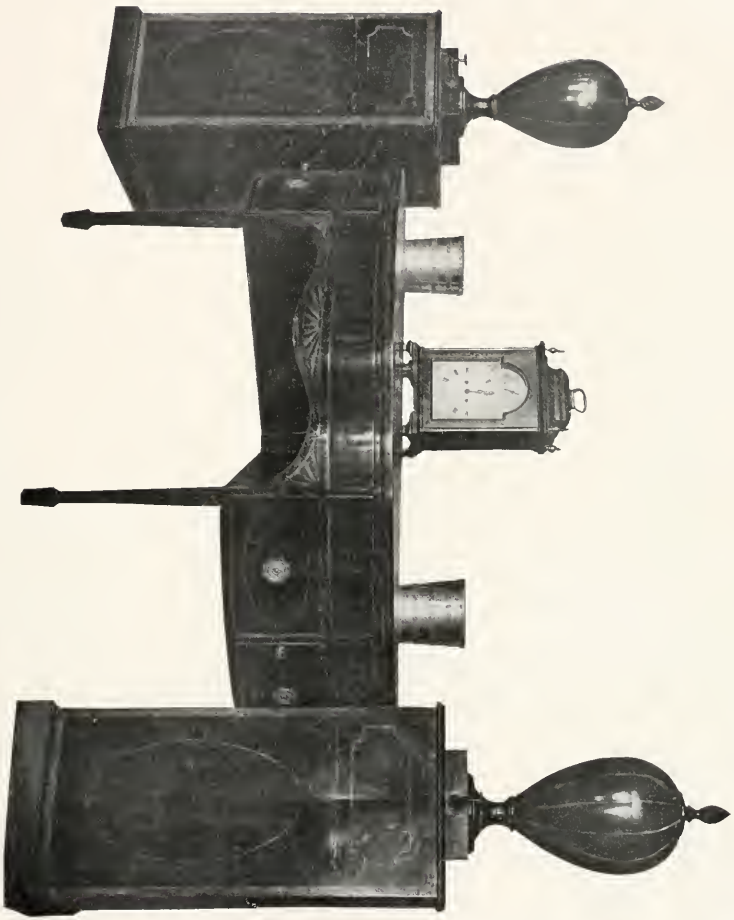

Fig. 177.

MAHOGANY SEMICIRCULAR SIDEBOARD, WITH PEDESTALS AND URNS.

Sideboard: 5 ft. 3 ins. wide × 2 ft. 7 ins. deep × 2 ft. 9 ins. high. Pedestals: 3 ft. 1 in. high × 1 ft. 2 in. wide.
Urns: 1 ft. 10 ins. high.
Date about 1785.

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although overshadowed by the greater renown of Hepplewhite and Sheraton, was a designer of some note, being responsible for many of the plates in the 1788 and 1793 editions of *The Cabinet-makers' London Book of Prices*. If priority of publication count for anything, to Shearer must be given the credit of being the first to introduce the self-contained sideboard, other than that of the pedestal type, as distinct from the side table. The latter had hitherto fulfilled the sole function of a serving-board, and drawers in the frieze were exceptional. Even when the addition of separate pedestals was introduced by Adam and Hepplewhite, the use of these does not appear to have been properly comprehended by the latter, as it is not the function of a sideboard to act as a plate-warmer, still less of the other uses referred to by Hepplewhite. Shearer appears to have been the first to add a wine drawer or cellarette, a useful and practical adjunct to the sideboard, and to have fitted it with drawers and a cupboard for holding napery, silver, and table glass. If it were possible to reconstruct the history of the craftsmanship of this period in detail, it would probably be found that Shearer influenced both Sheraton and Hepplewhite & Co. in the character of their

Fig. 178.
MAHOGANY SIDE TABLE WITH PEDESTALS AND URNS.
Pedestals and Urns: 5 ft. 8 ins. high × 1 ft. 3½ ins. wide.
Side Table: 5 ft. 4 ins. long × 2 ft. 4 ins. deep × 3 ft. high.
Date about 1790.

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designs. The fact that he was commissioned to provide the plates in the "*Price Book*" by the Cabinet-makers' Society of that date—an association including both masters and workmen, and quite distinct in character from the present-day trade union society—speaks well for his status as a practical cabinet-maker, the credentials of both the firm of Hepplewhite and even Sheraton himself being somewhat dubious in this particular. Shearer, through the medium of the "*Price Book*"—a volume indispensable to every master and workman at this period—must have influenced his trade in even greater degree than either Hepplewhite or Sheraton, and to him was probably due the prevalence of certain details which are absolutely ignored by the two latter. Two of these are shown in the next example, Fig. 174, one being the scrolled pediment finishing on the volute with a turned patera, and the other the ogee-moulded bracket-foot. The latter especially is probably one of the most familiar details in the cabinet-work of 1780–90, evidenced very strongly in the case of the conservative firm of Gillows of Lancaster, in whose cost-books this foot is illustrated on nearly every other page. The scrolled pediment, of the type shown here, is also referred to as the "Tuscan" form, and the pattern must have been an oft-repeated one to have acquired a definite name. In the cabinet, Fig. 174, the upper doors are of similar character to those on the lower part of Fig. 168. The under carcase is based on the form of the serpentine-fronted

Fig. 179.
MAHOGANY PEDESTAL AND URN.
5 ft. 11 ins. high × 1 ft. 3 ins. wide.
Date about 1785.

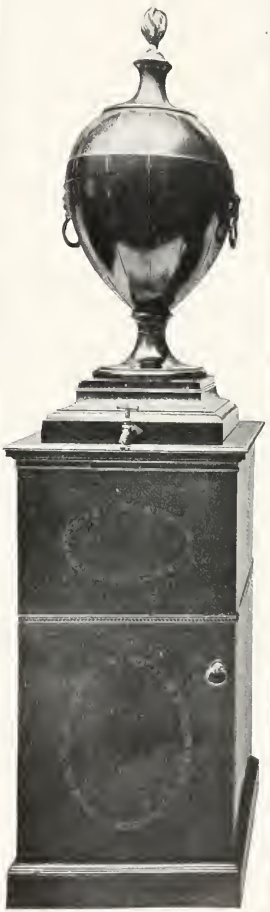

Fig. 180.
The companion Pedestal and Urn to Fig. 179.

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chests of drawers of the later Chippendale period. The top drawer is fitted with a grooved and lined writing-slide running on tongued fillets, and the whole piece suggests that its functions were of a composite character, its proper habitat being, in all probability, the bedroom.

Fig. 175 illustrates another phase of the Adam character which appears to have permeated the whole trade, but where the influence of Hepplewhite is not in any way apparent. Traces of the style of Chippendale will be noticed in the corner brackets and the central tablet, although the date of this table is probably some years after his death. The same character is also evident in the next example, Fig. 176, which, although having the general appearance of a writing-table, has been made and fitted as a sideboard.

The popularity of the pedestal sideboard for lofty and large apartments had been firmly established by Robert Adam, and an extraordinary amount of fine and difficult cabinet-work was frequently lavished on these pieces during the Hepplewhite period. Figs. 177, 179, and 180 show the oviform urn * which was a favourite pattern at this date, altnough superseded by the vase form in the hands of Shearer and Sheraton. These oviform urns were usually lead or foil lined, made with small lift-off caps on the tops and fitted with plated taps below. Their function appears to have been to hold rose-water for use in finger-bowls. In Fig. 177 the semicircular sideboard is of later character than the pedestals and urns, the original table being, in all probability, either straight or with the front swept in a flat bow. In Figs. 179 and 180 the urns are fitted with handles at the sides, the functions of the pedestals being those prescribed by Hepplewhite in the *Guide*. Fig. 178 shows the five-piece pedestal sideboard of this "Hepplewhite-Adam" period in its complete form, the urns here being fitted with a perforated three-tier terrace to hold knives, forks, and spoons, the top rising on a central pillar.

The furniture of this period, from 1780 to 1792, merges from the Adam into the Sheraton period, and in many ways forecasts the character of the work of the latter designer. Thomas Sheraton, however, in spite of plagiarism, and of influences received from others without acknowledgment and even with opprobrium in lieu of thanks, did so much for the improvement in the design of the furniture of his period, that the consideration of his style merits separate consideration at some length and detail, and this will therefore be reserved for succeeding chapters.

* See Fig. 129, as an example of Hepplewhite's version of urns of this form.

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Chapter X.

Hepplewhite's Chairs, Sofas, and Settees.

IN the first volume of this book, certain reasons were adduced in support of the theory that the trades of the "joyner" and the chair-maker were quite distinct during the reign of Anne and the first two Georges. The tendency of the later eighteenth century was towards greater rather than lesser specialisation. Sheraton refers, in the text to the *Drawing Book*, to a certain John Lane, who was a maker of knife-cases, and therefore capable of producing these articles both better and cheaper than other cabinet-makers. With specialisation such as this, it is difficult to imagine that the trades of the cabinet-maker and the chair-maker were combined in the hands of craftsmen such as Chippendale and Hepplewhite. When we come to examine their chair designs, as distinct from the pieces which were actually made at the period—in which the rationalising influence of the practical chair-maker had been at work—we find that we have been confusing terms, and that what we really implied by the term "chair-maker" was a designer of chairs. In this respect, in the case of Thomas Chippendale, we were enabled to compare his *Director* designs with some of the actual models made after them, and the result proved that, however fertile Chippendale may have been in designing, his want of practical knowledge—the trained eye for proportion of a practical craftsman—was at once apparent. Thus we had chairs without "stuffing-rails," and similar absurdities, illustrated on page after page of the *Director*.

Of all the eighteenth-century designers of chairs, with the single exception of Thomas Sheraton, Hepplewhite was the most practical, and the one whose designs needed the least modification in the process of manufacture. The reference here is, of course, to the author of the patterns illustrated in the *Guide*, which, if only for convenience, may be assumed to be George Hepplewhite himself. Even here, however, want of technical experience originate such absurdities as the "French sofa" illustrated in Fig. 241.

If in many of the furniture designs of Hepplewhite the influence of Robert Adam is traceable, there is strong evidence for the opposite in the case of chairs and settees. Hepplewhite's chairs are among his most original creations, and if the lapse of one hundred and thirty years obliges us to class together all the productions of his period which are in his style, and ascribe the authorship of them to him, there is not the same implication of plagiarism as in the case of Thomas Chippendale. With the latter,

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what is known as the "Chippendale style" was so general throughout the trade, and at the very outset of his post-*Director* career, that we were compelled to view his claims to originality somewhat askance. Hepplewhite's *Guide* was the first of its kind in the field, and if he borrowed from Robert Adam, the latter was frequently the gainer thereby.

We can commence our examination of Hepplewhite's chairs and "sofas"—the term "settee," although more applicable, is of later date—with the following extracts from the *Guide*.

"THE CABINET-MAKER AND UPHOLSTERER'S GUIDE, &c.

"CHAIRS.

"The general dimension and proportion of chairs are as follows: Width in front 20 inches, depth of the seat 17 inches, height of the seat frame 17 inches; total height about 3 feet 1 inch. Other dimensions are frequently adapted according to the size of the room or pleasure of the purchaser.

"Chairs in general are made of (1) mahogany, with the bars and frame sunk in a hollow, or rising in a round projection, with a band or list on the inner and outer edges. Many of these designs are enriched with ornaments proper to be carved in mahogany as the designs A B, plates 1, 2, &c.

"Mahogany chairs should have the seats of horsehair, plain, striped, chequered, &c., at pleasure.

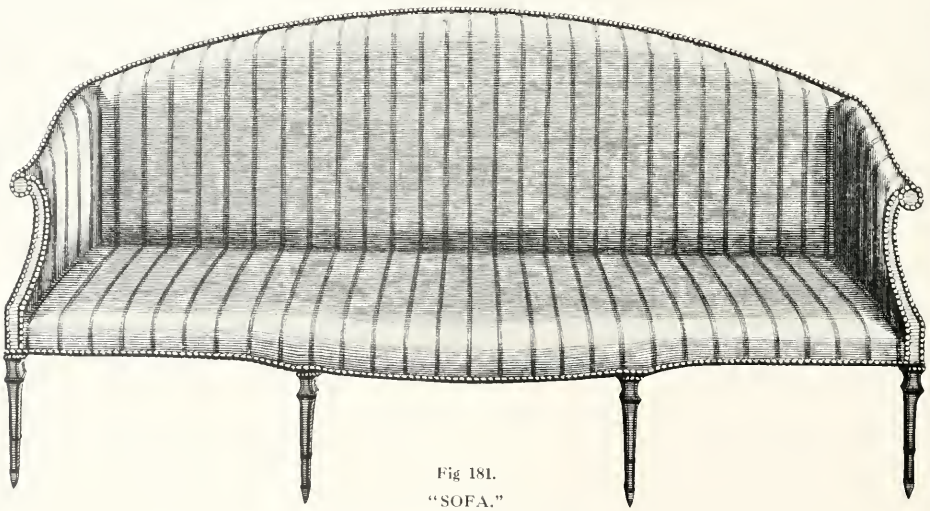

Fig 181.
"SOFA."
Plate 22 in all editions of the *Guide*.

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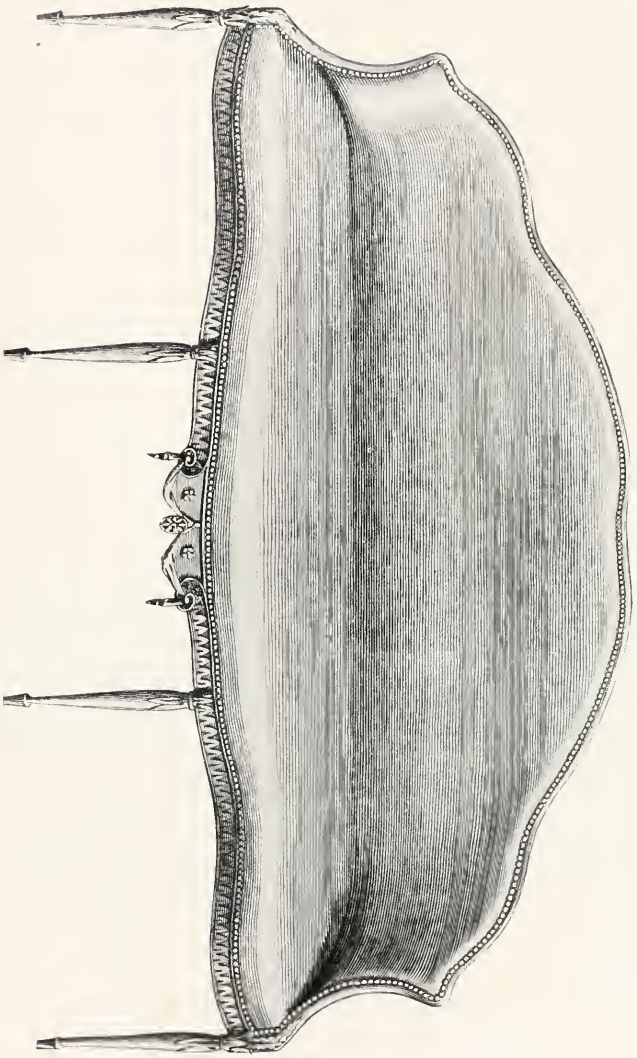

Fig. 182.

"SOFA."

Plate 23 in all editions of the *Guide*.

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"For chairs, a new and very elegant fashion has arisen within these few years, of finishing them with painted or japanned work, which gives a rich and splendid appearance to the minuter parts of the ornaments, which are generally thrown in by the painter. The designs K, plate 6; Q, plate 7; R and S, plate 8, are particularly adapted to this stile, which allows a frame-work less massy than is requisite for mahogany; and by assorting the prevailing colour to the furniture and the light of the room, affords opportunity, by the variety of grounds which may be introduced, to make the whole accord in harmony, with a pleasing and striking effect to the eye. Japanned chairs should always have lined or cotton cases to accord with the general hue of the chair.

"This kind of chair in general is called banister back chair; for which are given eighteen different designs.

"Chairs with Stuffed Backs

are called cabriole chairs. The designs E F are of the newest fashion; the arms to F, though much higher than usual, have (2) been executed with a good effect for his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. The designs, plate 11, are also quite new. To the design X, plate 12, we have given a French foot; the enrichments of which may be either carved, carved and gilt, or japanned."

Fig. 183.

JAPANNED AND PAINTED SETTEE.

6 ft. 6 ins. long × 3 ft. 0 ins. high from floor to top of back.

1 ft. 10½ ins. inside depth of seat.

Date about 1785.

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It will be noticed in the foregoing that Hepplewhite's ideas of chair proportions are somewhat elastic, dimensions being adapted "according to the size of the room or pleasure of the purchaser." One would have thought that the design and purpose of the particular chair would have been a more important factor in the regulation of sizes. Horsehair appears to have been the fashionable material for coverings at this date, and many of Hepplewhite's patterns must have demanded considerable skill on the part of the upholsterers in covering with this material, which admits of stretching only across the warp, the weft threads being absolutely inelastic.

The reference to "japanning" is obviously meant to indicate what is known as a decorated chair, and the designs alluded to as being especially suitable for this form of decoration are given later on in this chapter.

Fig. 181 is a sofa, the design of which appears in all three editions of the *Guide*. The covering is obviously the horsehair cloth alluded to by Hepplewhite, which was made in a wide range of patterns at this period—striped, chequered, and "herring-boned"—and a large number of colourings—white, red, green, blue, and black. Such are the wearing properties of this material that it is not exceptional to find well-preserved specimens of the chair-work of this date with the original coverings intact even at the present

Fig. 184.
SATINWOOD SETTEE.
6 ft. 1 in. extreme length × 3 ft. 1 in. from floor to top of back.
1 ft. 10 ins. inside depth of seat.
Date about 1790.

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day. The usual—in fact the only practicable finish to these horsehair coverings was the close brass nailing as indicated in this illustration from the *Guide*. Springs were unknown at this period; the frame was usually closely webbed and "back-tacked," stout canvas stretched across, and the necessary resiliency obtained by well-curled horsehair.

Fig. 182 is a more ambitious and far less practicable pattern, and although the sweep of the arms is an obvious absurdity, this plate is repeated in all three editions of the *Guide*. The central tablet of the seat rail, and the bulbous legs with carved water-leaf decoration, are both typical of Hepplewhite's true style.

Fig. 183 is probably a closer approximation to the form such a settee would have taken in the process of manufacture. The frame here is of beech, japanned a deep cream, and decorated with rosettes and sprigs of flowers in blues and greens. The squab cushion was a logical necessity, in the absence of springs, with covering fabrics other than horsehair. Fig. 184 is a "tub-sofa" of satinwood, the fluted legs and seat rail being almost a direct copy from the French Louis Seize. To cover the inside back of the settee with the horsehair cloth recommended by Hepplewhite would be almost an impossible task.

Fig. 185.

MAHOGANY SETTEE.

3 ft. 7 ins. wide × 3 ft. 0 ins. high from floor to top of back × 1 ft. 8½ ins. deep outside.

Date about 1780.

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Fig. 186.

MAHOGANY WRITING CHAIR.

2 ft. 8 ins. from floor to top of back. 2 ft. 1½ ins. across front of seat. 1 ft. 9½ ins. depth of seat. 1 ft. 3 ins. height of seat from floor.

Date about 1780.

Fig. 187.

MAHOGANY WRITING CHAIR.

In the possession of Messrs. Colling & Young.

2 ft. 11½ ins. high. 1 ft. 4¼ ins. height to top of seat. 1 ft. 10½ ins. width across front of seat. 1 ft. 7½ ins. depth of seat.

Date about 1780.

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Fig. 185 is a small settee of characteristic Hepplewhite form, and although the covering is modern, the illustration shows the decorative possibilities of horsehair cloth very well. The quiet, dignified lines of this settee, with tapered legs finishing in brass socket castors, the gentle sweep of the arms, moulded on the fronts and finishing in small panels above the legs, are instances of the refinement which pervaded the simple mahogany furniture of this period. The two writing-chairs, Figs. 186 and 187, accord with this settee very well. The sweep of the back and the open arm of Fig. 186 were probably a concession to the extravagantly hooped dresses of the ladies of this period. Fig. 187 has two of the original castors, with bowls of hard leather, which were illustrated and described in the second volume of this book. This chair is covered with paste-grain morocco, now faded, but originally of an apple-green shade, which is probably nearly contemporary with the chair.

Fig. 188 is another of the long settees of this date, which illustrates the modification to which such designs as Figs. 181 and 182 would be subjected in the process of making by a practical chair-maker.

The period of the Hepplewhite furniture, which may be said to extend from about 1780 to 1792, was an age of comfortable upholstery. Chippendale before, and Sheraton at a later date, bestowed very scanty attention on the settee as an article of furniture.

Fig. 188.
MAHOGANY SETTEE.
6 ft. 6 ins. long × 3 ft. high from floor to top of back × 1 ft. 9½ ins. deep from front to back.
Date about 1785-90.

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Fig. 189.

MAHOGANY SETTEE.

6 ft. 2 ins. wide × 2 ft. 11 ins. from floor to top of back.

1 ft. 11½ ins. deep outside.

Date about 1775-80.

Fig. 190.

INLAID MAHOGANY SETTEE.

6 ft. 3 ins. wide × 3 ft. 0 ins. high from floor to top of back.

2 ft. 0½ in. deep outside.

Date about 1780.

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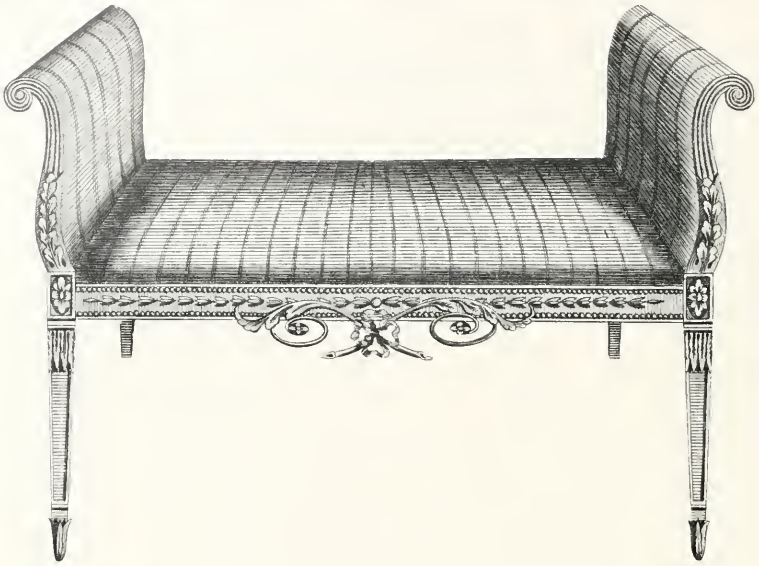

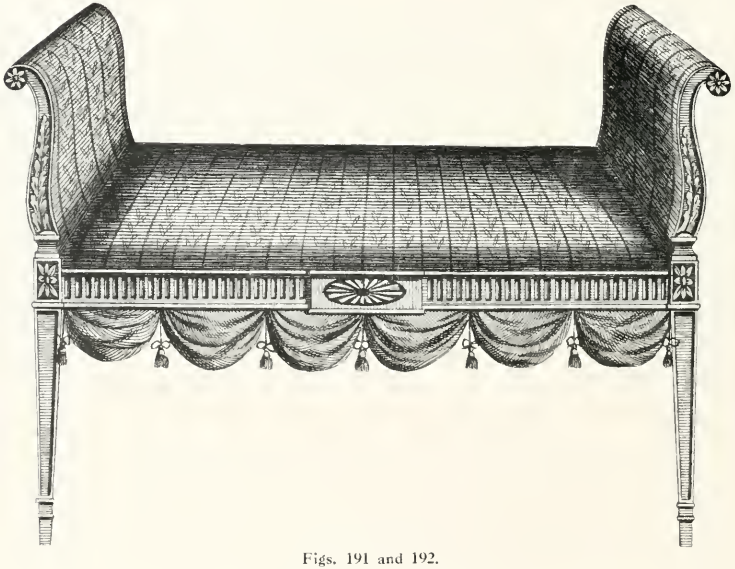

Figs. 191 and 192.

"WINDOW STOOLS."

Plate 19 in all editions of the *Guide*.

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With Chippendale especially, upholstered chairs and settees were made to please the eye rather than to rest the body. The period when the sofa had reached its most luxurious limits was during the reign of William III., numerous examples of which were given in the first volume. With the reign of Anne, fashion veered in the direction of the double chair-back settee, and Chippendale found this form more suitable for the display of his invention than that of the "stuff-over" type, which permitted of little scope for ornament. Hepplewhite solved the problem by the shaping of the back and arms and the turning of the front legs. He was the pioneer of the reeded leg encircled with a spiral ribbon, perhaps one of the prettiest fantasies ever devised in the history of English chair-making. The general taste of the period, however, appears to have been for simplicity of detail and quiet refinement of outline. The settee with "roll-over" arms,

Fig. 193.
MAHOGANY WINDOW-SEAT.
In the possession of Alan Mackinnon, Esq.
2 ft. 8¼ ins. from floor to top of back. 2 ft. 10¾ ins. width across front of seat.
1 ft. 5¼ ins. outside depth of seat.
Date about 1780.

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such as the next two examples, illustrated in Figs. 189 and 190, is quite in the fashion of the period, and is a good specimen of the ordinary middle-class upholstered furniture of this date. Many of the smaller country towns had grown in size and importance during the latter half of the eighteenth century, and side by side with the trade of the clock-maker that of the "joyner" had grown in degree, if not in importance. We can infer from the number of grandfather clock-cases made at this date, where both the design and workmanship are of the highest order, but where the clock, and presumably the case, were produced in insignificant country towns or villages, that it was a general custom for the London apprentices, when their term had expired, to migrate to the provinces and to maintain the London traditions in mere

Fig 194.
BEECH PAINTED WINDOW-SEAT.
In the possession of Messrs. Gill & Reigate.
2 ft. 11 ins. from floor to top of back. 3 ft. 4 ins. across front of seat.
1 ft. 11½ ins. depth of seat.
Date about 1785.

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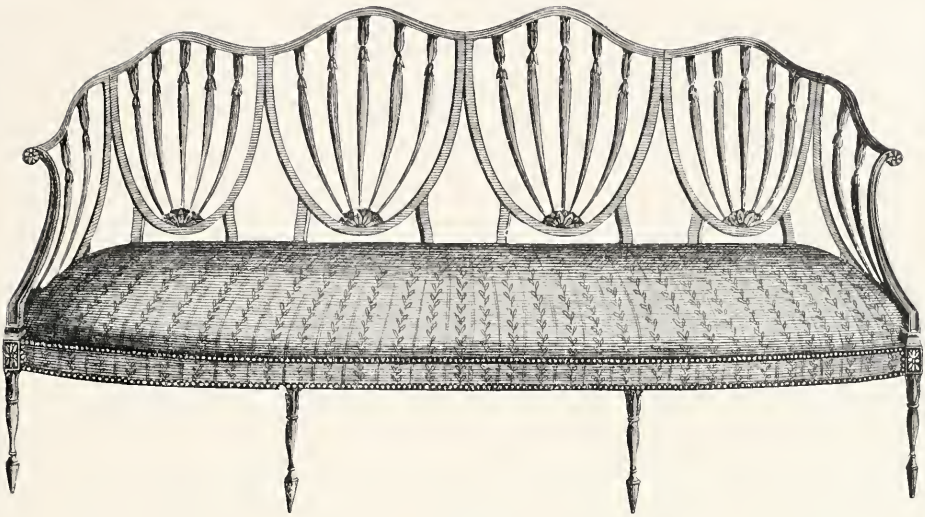

Fig. 195.

"BAR-BACK SOFA."

Plate 26 in all editions of the *Guide*.

Fig. 196.

PAINTED AND DECORATED SETTEE.

6 ft. 8 ins. long × 3 ft. 0½ in. extreme height at back.

1 ft. 7 ins. extreme depth of seat.

Date about 1785.

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hamlets and villages. It is from these makers that much of the simple but well-made furniture of 1780 to 1790 must have originated, and it shows to what extent fashion must have played a part that we can resolve nearly all the furniture of this date into some two or three types. With the enormous growth of population during the nineteenth century—from twelve and a half to over forty millions—it is difficult to comprehend how the trade of the "joyner" could have preserved such a degree of homogeneity at this period; but it must be remembered that not only was the population small at this date—comparatively speaking—but the available patrons of the maker of furniture, even of the most simple type, must have been in far less proportion in relation to the total number of the inhabitants than is the case at the present day. To say that the entire trade divided between them a clientele of a quarter of a million is probably largely overstating the fact, even although the middle, or trading classes, had grown greatly in power and importance during the Georgian era. In spite of the fact that the later nineteenth century has witnessed the growth of large combines and trusts, and the

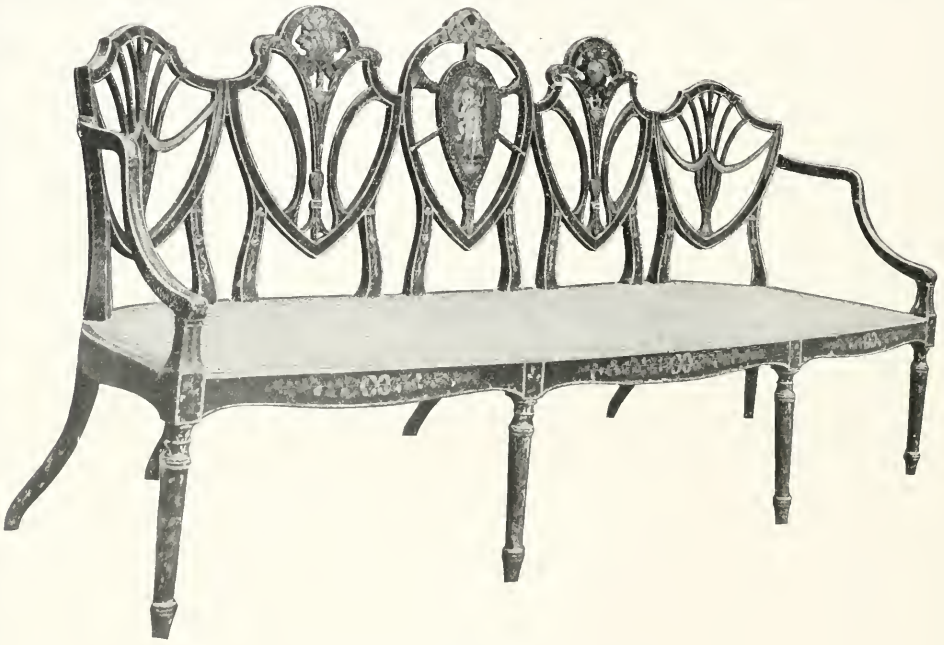

Fig. 197.
PAINTED AND DECORATED SETTEE.
6 ft. 6 ins. long × 1 ft. 9¾ ins. depth of seat.
Height at back 3 ft. 3 ins.
Date about 1790.

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making of fortunes measured by millions, there is no doubt that, as a general rule, wealth is more equally distributed at the present day than was the case during the eighteenth century. The wages of the artisan classes were small, both in amount and in purchasing power, and the cost of all luxuries, even those which have since become almost necessaries, was prohibitively high. It is intended, at a later stage, when the firm of Gillow of Lancaster is considered, to give some exact idea of the status of the artisan classes, and also the cost of the furniture produced during the later Georgian era.

With this unequal distribution of wealth, and a far larger class on the border line of want and destitution than can even be imagined at the present day, the available patrons of the maker of furniture must have been not only small in numbers, but also could not have extended below the grade of the moderately wealthy. At the present day costly furniture is exceptional as compared with that of the plain and inexpensive type which is produced in vast quantities for the lower middle and even the artisan classes. During the eighteenth century the reverse must have been the case. Furniture of all kinds, even

Fig. 198.
MAHOGANY CHAIR.
In the Victoria and Albert Museum.
3 ft. 0½ in. from floor to top of back.
Seat, 1 ft. 10 ins. wide × 1 ft. 7 ins. deep.
Date about 1795.

Fig. 199.
MAHOGANY CHAIR.
3 ft. 1½ ins. from floor to top of back.
Seat, 1 ft. 9 ins. wide × 1 ft. 4½ ins. deep.
Date about 1795.

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of the most simple kind, was nearly always well made, the woods carefully selected, and so high was the cost of the raw material, especially of glass, that it was proportionally more profitable to make elaborate than simple furniture, the value of the labour being, proportionally, one of the most insignificant items. The eighteenth century has, therefore, been justly styled the "Golden Age" of English cabinet-making. Fine and costly furniture—reckoned by our present-day standard—was made for two reasons: firstly, because the patrons of the "joyner" were almost exclusively of the wealthy classes; and, secondly, because the value of the time and labour involved was of little account when, in 1780, the cabinet-maker worked twelve hours for a wage of from two shillings to half-a-crown per day.

Robert Adam did much to popularise the window-seat, if he did not actually introduce it into English furnishing fashions. An absurd building byelaw, directing that all windows must be set back four and a half inches from the exterior face of the brickwork, had not come into force during the eighteenth century, and windows were set flush outside, the full thickness of the wall being thrown into the room. In these deep recesses—the days of "fourteen-inch work" had yet to come—it was customary

Figs. 200 and 201.

MAHOGANY ARM AND SMALL CHAIRS.

3 ft. 1½ ins. from floor to top of back.
1 ft. 11½ ins. across front of seat.
1 ft. 8 ins. depth of seat.

3 ft. 0½ in. from floor to top of back.
1 ft. 9½ ins. across front of seat.
1 ft. 7 ins. depth of seat.

Date about 1785–90.

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to place window-seats of similar pattern to the two reproductions from the *Guide*, illustrated in Figs. 191 and 192. Both designs exhibit strong Adam influence, and were probably inserted as novelties, both being impracticable in character. The double-scroll on the seat framing of the first is a detail impossible even with wired *carton pierre*, and the draperies under the seat rail of the second are equally absurd. Apart from these incongruities, however, both examples are gracefully designed, and show how thoroughly the *Guide* caught the characteristic manner of the brothers Adam.

Fig. 193 is an even better example of this "Adam-Hepplewhite" furniture. The framing

Fig. 202.
MAHOGANY ARM CHAIR.
3 ft. 1½ ins. from floor to top of back.
1 ft. 11 ins. across front of seat.
1 ft. 7½ ins. depth of seat.
Date about 1785-90.

Fig. 203.
SATINWOOD PAINTED ARM CHAIR.
3 ft. 2 ins. from floor to top of back.
1 ft. 10½ ins. across front of seat.
1 ft. 7½ ins. depth of seat.
Date about 1790.

of this settee is of hard mahogany, carved with flutes, pateræ, and pendant fuchsia flower. For accuracy of proportion and dignity of style, this dainty settee is an inimitable specimen of the period from 1780 to 1790.

Fig. 194 is a seat, shaped on the back to fit a semicircular bay. The framing is of beech, now painted black, but probably japanned and parcel-gilt in the original instance. The seat is upholstered, the back and sides being caned. These cane-backed settees were usually fitted with loose squab cushions, taped on the backs and tied through the interstices of the caning.

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Fig. 204.

MAHOGANY CHAIR.

3 ft 1½ ins. from floor to top of back.
1 ft. 9 ins. across front of seat.
1 ft. 5½ ins. depth of seat.
1 ft. 6½ ins. from floor to top of seat.

Date about 1785-90.

The whole design of this seat, although possessing details which are obviously Adam in inspiration, is characteristic of Hepplewhite, especially noticeable on the pattern of the turned front legs and the inward curving of the seat rail on the front.

Fig. 195 is what Hepplewhite styles a "bar-back sofa," and figures in all three editions of the *Guide*. Some allowance must be made for the bad draughtsmanship, which has distorted each chair-back and represented the front legs of inadequate thickness to support the weight of a sitter, otherwise this design is typically Hepplewhite in character, showing the shield-baluster-back which he used with such effect in his chairs. The following is the description of this piece as given in the *Guide* :—

"Plate 26 is a design for a bar-back sofa; this kind of sofa is of modern invention; and the lightness of its appearance has procured it a favourable reception in the first circles of fashion. The pattern of the back must match the chairs; these also will regulate the sort of framework and covering."

These chair-back settees became very popular during the years from 1780 to 1795. They were usually made from satinwood or beech, japanned

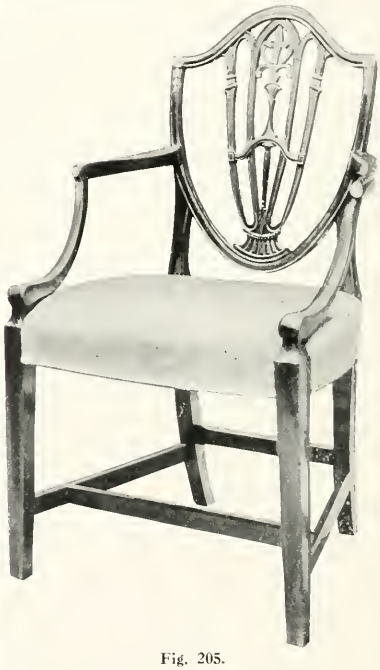

Fig. 205.

MAHOGANY ARM CHAIR.

3 ft. 3 ins. from floor to top of back.
1 ft. 10 ins. across front of seat.
1 ft. 7 ins. outside depth of seat.

Date about 1780.

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to imitate the more expensive wood, and were generally decorated with paintings of flowers, draperies, and the like. Two examples of these elaborate settees are shown in Figs. 196 and 197. Figs. 198 and 199 are two mahogany chairs, the backs of which match those of the settee from the *Guide*. Both have the appearance of being of provincial origin. It is surprising what snares these apparently simple shield-back chairs are for the inexperienced maker. To attain the requisite degree of comfort and stability, combined with proportions and form pleasing to the eye, is a task of consider-

Fig. 206.
MAHOGANY ARM CHAIR.
3 ft. 1 in. high from floor to top of back.
1 ft. 10½ ins. across front of seat.
1 ft. 6½ ins. depth of seat.
Date about 1780.

Fig. 207.
MAHOGANY ARM CHAIR.
3 ft. 0½ ins. from floor to top of back.
1 ft. 11½ ins. across front of seat.
1 ft. 7½ ins. depth of seat.
Date about 1780.

able difficulty, compared with which the most elaborate of Chippendale's models are mere apprentice work. A comparison of these two chairs with the arm and single chairs shown in Figs. 200 and 201 will illustrate the point very well. The central balusters of both these latter are united to the top rail by the "Prince of Wales' feathers," a very favourite *motif* with Hepplewhite, and one which he was careful to emphasise in the *Guide*. The shield-backs are edged with a small double beading on the inner and outer edges, and although the dimensions of total

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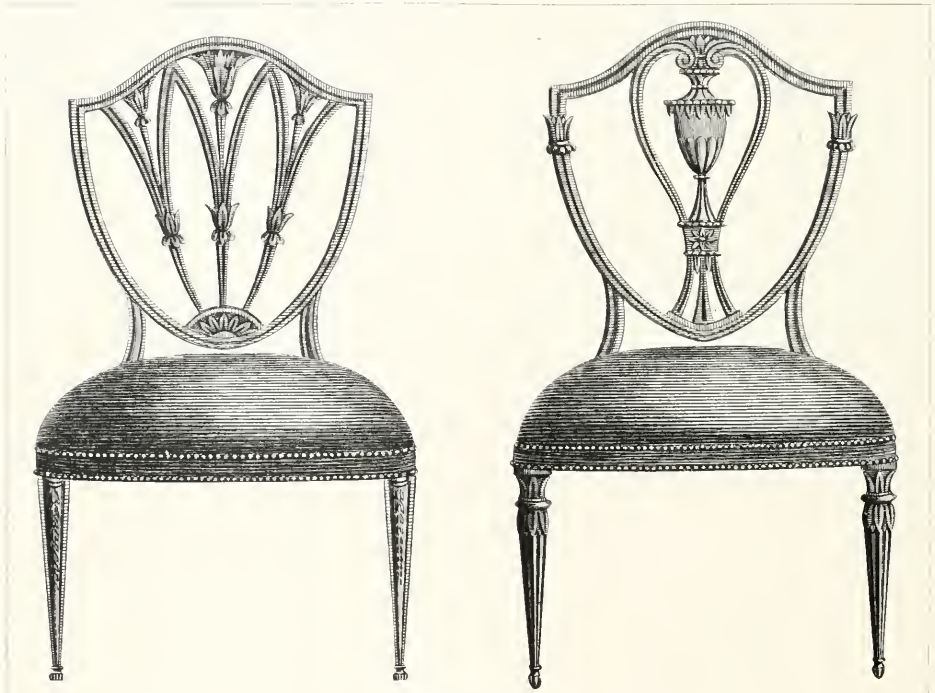
height and width of seat vary in the two, the backs are identical both in size and detail.

Fig. 202 is a more stylish edition of Nos. 198 and 199, and Fig. 203 illustrates another treatment of this shield-baluster-back by suspending swags of painted drapery from the central baluster to the corners of the top rail.

The endeavour, in this chapter, is to collect and illustrate representative types of Hepplewhite's well-known chair patterns. It is necessary, for clearness and convenience, to devise names for each, so that they can be distinguished the one from the other in cases of future reference at a later stage. We are concerned at present with shield-back chairs, and in the examples already considered, the entire shield is filled with three or five shaped and carved balusters. To adequately describe this type we must use the compound term of "serpentine-top, shield-back baluster chairs." Fig. 204 is a variation of this pattern, where the back is, in shape, something like a Crusader's shield. This we can indicate as a "bow-top, shield-back baluster." Fig. 205 introduces



Figs. 208 and 209.
CHAIRS.
Plate 5 in the *Cabinet-maker and Upholsterer's Guide*, second and third editions.
This plate does not appear in the first edition.

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Fig. 210.

MAHOGANY CHAIR.

2 ft. 11 ins. from floor to top of back.
1 ft. 7½ ins. across front of seat.
1 ft. 5 ins. depth of seat.
1 ft. 4 ins. extreme width of back.
1 ft. 7 ins. extreme height of seat from floor.

Date about 1780.

Fig. 211.

MAHOGANY CHAIR.

3 ft. 2½ ins. from floor to back.
1 ft. 9 ins. across front of seat.
1 ft. 5½ ins. depth of seat.
1 ft. 7½ ins. extreme height of seat from floor.
1 ft. 4¼ ins. extreme width of back.

Date about 1775-80.

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another departure, where, instead of the back being entirely filled with balusters, these are connected together in the form of a central splat. This we can refer to as a "serpentine-top, shield-back, central-splat chair." This model is unusual in the fact that the ornament is carved from boxwood and applied, a method which was practised to a considerable extent by the cabinet-makers who worked for Robert Adam, as we have seen in a previous chapter. In the central splat of this chair may be traced some still lingering influence of the Gothic taste of 1760–70. It would be absurd to suggest a rule, on the meagre evidence available, but it is somewhat remarkable that it is only these central-splatted, shield-backed chairs which have the legs tied together with a stretcher-underframing as a general custom. I am inclined, for reasons which are not easy to define, to place the central-splatted chairs with stretcher-underframings among the very earliest productions of the school of Hepplewhite, and they were probably out of fashion at the date of the death of the founder of the style. Among these reasons may be mentioned the distinct traces of the Gothic which they nearly all exhibit,—a fashion which had almost died out by the end of the year 1780;—and the fact that French influences were paramount after 1785, which would discourage the use of the stretcher-underframing.

Fig. 212.
MAHOGANY ARM CHAIR.
In the possession of Messrs. Waring & Gillon.
3 ft. 4½ ins. from floor to top of back.
1 ft. 11¼ ins. across front of seat.
1 ft. 8 ins. outside depth of seat.
Date about 1790.

Figs. 206 and 207 may be described as "serpentine-top, shield-back, lyre-splatted" chairs. The use of the lyre for the decoration of the backs of chairs was one of the distinctly Hepplewhite motives which were borrowed by Thomas Sheraton, not only without acknowledgment, but with considerable reviling of the creator of the detail. It may be pointed out, as some indication of date, that in the earlier Hepplewhite "elbow" chairs the arms sweep down in one unbroken line from the back to the front

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legs, finishing on the squares, whereas in those of the later type the arm supports are outside the side rails of the seat and are secured to them by dowels—a more decorative but far weaker finish. A comparison of Figs. 206 and 207 with Fig. 205 will explain this point.

Figs. 208 and 209 are two patterns of baluster and central-splatted, shield-back chairs from the second and third editions of the *Guide*. Neither can be taken very seriously, as both have the appearance of being "fill-up" designs, faulty in proportion and impractical in character. They are useful as establishing Hepplewhite's right to be regarded as the originator of the shield-back chair, in spite of the claims which have been made for Thomas Sheraton in this particular. As we shall see at a later stage, the latter illustrated the shield-back on two occasions only in the *Drawing Book*, and then in a manner which was not only not successful, but also indicated an absence of sympathy with the form, his preference being for the square-back which is thoroughly characteristic of his style.

Fig. 213
SATINWOOD INLAID CHAIR.
3 ft. 1 in. high from floor to top of back.
1 ft. 7½ ins. across front of seat.
1 ft. 6½ ins. depth of seat.

Fig. 214.
MAHOGANY CHAIR.
3 ft. 0½ in. from floor to top of back.
1 ft. 9½ ins. across front of seat.
1 ft. 6½ ins. depth of seat.

Fig. 210 is a somewhat exceptional model, where the shield of the back is filled with a trophy centred with an elliptical patera on which a similar device is repeated. This chair was one of a large set in private hands in Cornwall, although probably since dispersed. It is a beautiful specimen of the choice designing and fine workmanship of about 1780. The next example is fully equal to it in point of quality. In both will be noticed the hollowed seat, a detail borrowed by the school of Hepplewhite from

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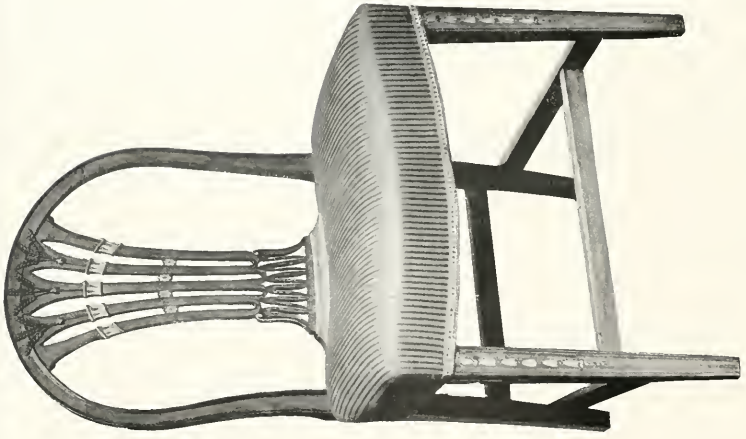

Fig. 215.
SATINWOOD CHAIR.
In the possession of Messrs. A. B. Daniell & Son.
3 ft. 2 ins. from floor to top of back.
1 ft. 11 ins. across front of seat.
1 ft. 7 ins. depth of seat.
Date about 1780.

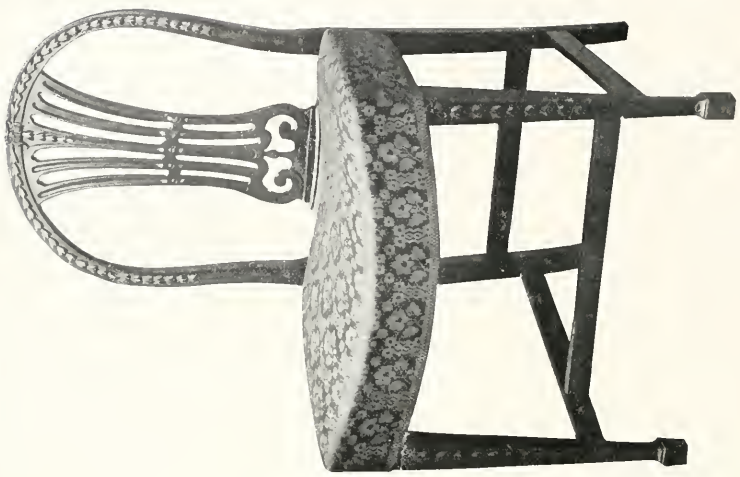

Fig. 216.
MAHOGANY CHAIR.
3 ft. $0\frac{3}{4}$ in. from floor to top of back.
1 ft. $11\frac{1}{2}$ ins. across front of seat.
1 ft. $7\frac{3}{4}$ ins. depth of seat.
Date about 1785.

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that of Chippendale, and used with considerable effect. Fig. 212 shows a rare form of the shield-back, the top rail boldly curved, and the shield finishing in a point on the level of the seat. The back is well hollowed out, for greater comfort, and the entire design is exceedingly vigorous and fine.

Figs. 213 and 214 introduce another favourite pattern of chair-back, that of the interlaced heart. This is one of the most characteristic of all Hepplewhite's patterns, in the sense that it was not adopted by any of his competitors in the many design-books which were published at this period. The pattern is a logical evolution from that of the ordinary shield-back.

Fig. 215 introduces the hoop-back, another purely Hepplewhite conception. This chair, of carved satinwood, originally formed part of a large set. The central splat exhibits traces of the Gothic influence; in fact it is in these models, if anywhere, where the styles of Chippendale and Hepplewhite overlap. The back, carried in a continuous

Fig. 217.

MAHOGANY AND BOXWOOD CHAIR.

3 ft. 2 ins. high from floor to top of back.
1 ft. 9½ ins. width across front of seat.
1 ft. 6½ ins. depth of seat.

Date about 1790.

Fig. 218.

MAHOGANY CHAIR.

In the possession of A. R. Stilwell Freeland, Esq.

3 ft. 3 ins. high from floor to top of back.
1 ft. 10½ ins. across front of seat.
1 ft. 7½ ins. depth of seat.

Date about 1790.

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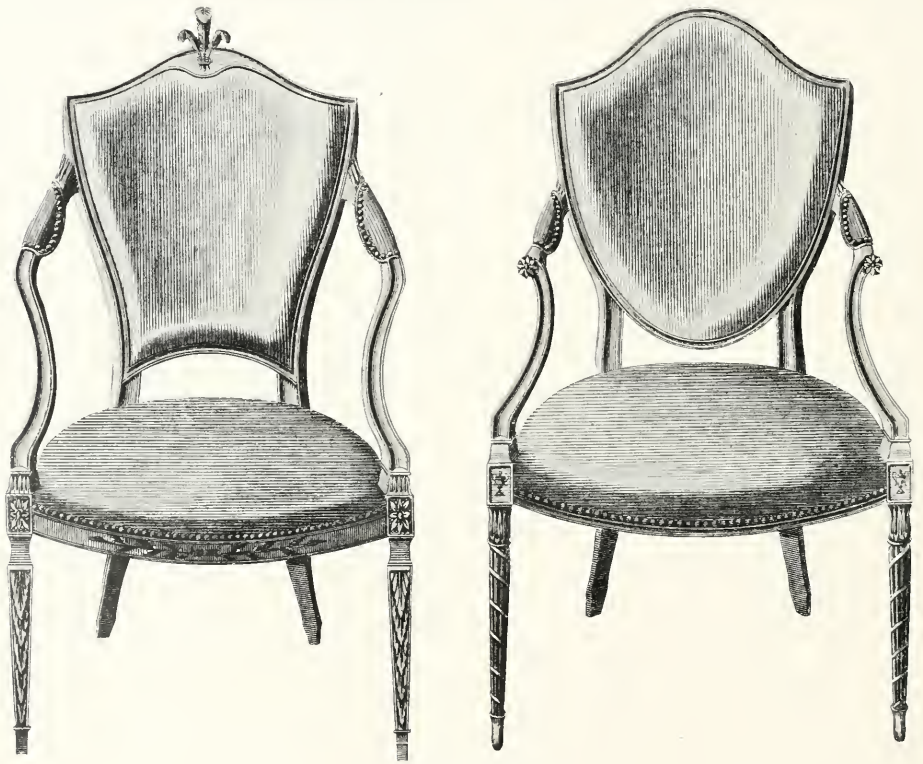
line from the one back leg to the other, is enriched with a small beading on the inner and outer edges. The central splat is pierced in five, united in pointed arches under the top rail, to which it is connected by three triple wheat-ears. Fig. 216 is a variation of Fig. 215, the back rail being filled with catkins between the inner and outer beadings. In both examples the seat is "dipped," a feature which appears to have been general in "hoop-back" chairs of this type. The pronounced Adam character of both hardly needs emphasising, especially in the case of Fig. 216; in fact the first may almost be regarded as a Hepplewhite variation of the second or more typical Adam example.

Fig. 217 shows another form of the Hepplewhite-Adam "hoop-back," the detail here being carved from boxwood and applied. From the oval centre radiate eight pierced balusters, of mahogany edged with lines of holly. The legs are turned and fluted, an



Figs. 219 and 220.

"CABRIOLE CHAIRS."

Plate 10 in all editions of the *Guide*.

"Cabriole chairs" are defined by "A. Hepplewhite & Co." as those having stuffed backs.

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Fig. 221.

BEECH PAINTED CHAIR.

In the possession of J. D. Phillips, Esq.

3 ft. 2 ins. from floor to top of back.

2 ft. 0 in. across front of seat.

1 ft. 6½ ins. depth of seat.

Date about 1790.

Fig. 222.

BEECH GILDED CHAIR.

In the possession of J. D. Phillips, Esq.

3 ft. 2¼ ins. from floor to top of back.

1 ft. 11½ ins. across front of seat.

1 ft. 6½ ins. depth of seat.

Date about 1790.

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unusual feature in these "hoop-back chairs." Fig. 218 has a typical Hepplewhite central splat, "stump-tenoned" into the curved top rail and the back framing of the seat. The legs are square-tapered, finishing in pointed moulded toes. The moulded "pediment" at the base of the splats is missing.

Figs. 219 and 220 are described as "cabriole chairs" in the *Guide*, a term implying "*chairs with stuffed backs*," and somewhat difficult of comprehension in consequence, having regard to the general use of the term as indicating the Dutch or French curved leg, so frequently used in the first and second volumes of this book. Fig. 219 is the design to which reference is made as "*having been executed with good effect for his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales.*" For convenience these chairs may be described as "solid shield-backs." Fig. 220 has the reeded, ribbon-encircled leg before referred to, a conception of purely Hepplewhite origin, in spite of the fact that it has been so generally attributed to Sheraton.

Fig. 223.
WHITE AND GOLD CHAIR.
(One of a pair.)
In the possession of C. J. Charles, Esq.
3 ft. 0 in. high from floor to top of seat.
2 ft. 0½ in. across front of seat.
1 ft. 8½ ins. depth of seat.
Date about 1790.

Figs. 221, 222, and 223 are further examples of these "solid shield-back" chairs, the first of beech, japanned—although much of the original japan has now perished. The framing of the back and the seat rails are decorated with a small reeded "nulling," the back legs above the seat and the front legs being "pearled." The graceful sweep of the arms and the method of uniting to the squares of the front legs are particularly fine. In the second, both back and seat are carved, an original method, although the present caning is modern. This chair is also of beech, carved and prepared for gilding, traces of the original gold still remaining. The third is also of beech, japanned in white and picked out with gold. The present decoration and upholstery are, of course, modern, but are unquestionably copies of the original condition.

The next characteristic pattern which we have to consider is the elliptical or "oval-back." Two examples from the *Guide* are

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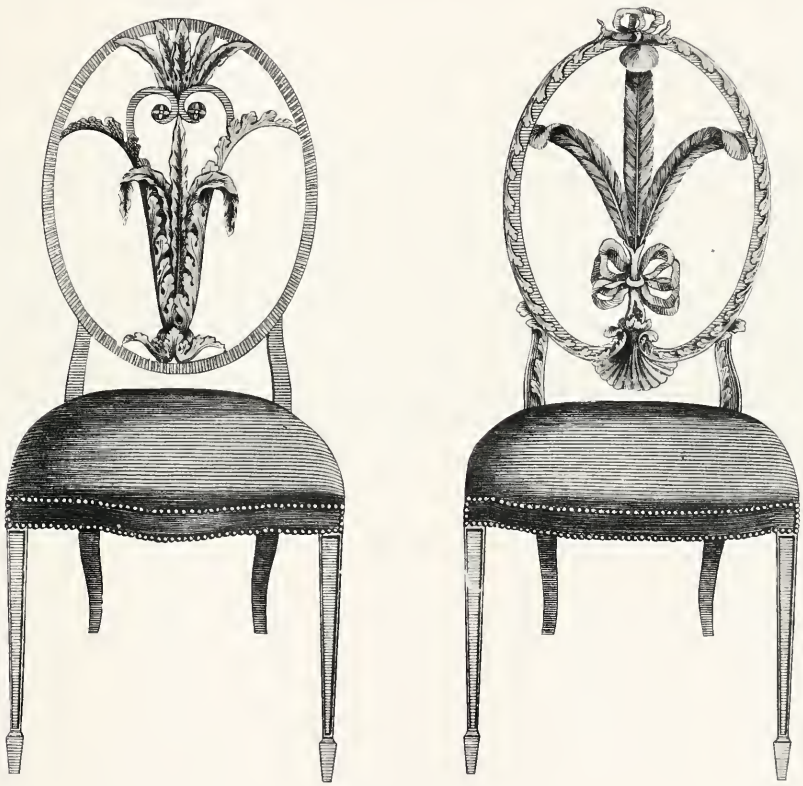
given in Figs. 224 and 225. These are the designs R and S referred to in the text as being especially suitable for japanning, "*a new and elegant fashion which has arisen within these few years*" and "*which gives a rich and splendid appearance to the minuter parts of the ornaments, which are generally thrown in by the painter.*" The suggestion here is that the backs of these chairs should be finished quite flat, the outlines only being pierced, and that the entire decoration should be painted on a japanned ground. The back of Fig. 225 has the central *motif* of the Prince of Wales' feathers tied with a "true-lovers' knot" below, a detail of which "A. Hepplewhite & Co." appear to have been inordinately proud. Fig. 226 belongs to the school of Adam rather than to that of Hepplewhite, the details being those more usual in the work of the



Figs. 224 and 225.

CHAIRS.

Plate 8 in all editions of the *Guide*.

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Fig. 226.

MAHOGANY ARM CHAIR.

In the Victoria and Albert Museum.

3 ft. 2½ ins. high from floor to the top of back. 2 ft. wide across front of seat.

Date about 1775.

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"Adelphi," such as, for example, the peculiar sweep of the oval back, the fluting of the rails, and the turning and carving of the legs which are all suggestive of the Nostell and Harewood period of Robert Adam. The general design, however, shows the rationalising influence of the Hepplewhite school of practical chairmakers, in the bracing of the back, the design of the central splat—which is only a variation of Hepplewhite's favourite interlaced-heart pattern—and the threading of the carved drapery through the carved pateræ and the sides of the oval. The sweep of the arms in unbroken curves from the back to the squares of the front legs is also characteristic of Hepplewhite rather than of Adam.

Fig. 227.
MAHOGANY ARM CHAIR.
3 ft. 2 ins. from floor to top of back.
1 ft. 9 ins. across front of seat.
1 ft. 7½ ins. depth of seat.
Date about 1775.

Fig. 228.
MAHOGANY ARM CHAIR.
In the possession of W. Clare Lees, Esq.
3 ft. 0 ins. from floor to top of back.
1 ft. 8 ins. across front of seat.
1 ft. 6 ins. depth of seat.
Date about 1785.

The entire design is an interesting example of an Adam-Hepplewhite "bridge piece" and holds a justifiable place in this review of the chair designs of the Hepplewhite school. Figs. 227, 228, and 229 are examples of these "oval-back" chairs, of which the first has the Adam character of so much of the furniture of this period, the second is typically Hepplewhite, and the third strongly tinged with the influence of the Louis Seize, the japanned and gilt finish still further emphasising this suggestion. Fig. 230 is given to show that the "ladder-back" chair—a pattern usually ascribed exclusively to Chippendale—is equally characteristic of other designers of this period, as in this example, where the general form suggests the St. Martin's Lane workshops, but the details of the carving indicate the influence of the Adelphi studio. As a matter of

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Fig. 229.

PAINTED AND GILT ARM CHAIR.

3 ft. 3 ins. from floor to top of back.
2 ft. 1 in. across front of seat.
1 ft. 7½ ins. depth of seat.

Date about 1780.

fact the "ladder-back" was a pattern common to the trade from 1760 to 1790, and was embellished in a variety of ways in the hands of different makers. The details of the patera and catkins applied to such a well-known model is much more suggestive of Hepplewhite than of Adam, having regard to the narrow limits of form to which the latter confined himself.

Figs. 231, 232, and 233 are three hall chairs from the *Guide*, all of which, although somewhat absurd in drawing, bear the appearance of having been copied from previously executed models. The five wheat-ears cresting the back of the first, the pieces uniting the shield-back to the seat of the second, and the pendent drapery in the back of the third, disconnected from the sides, are details probably due to exuberant fancy, or want of practical knowledge, on the part of the engraver. Hall chairs of this type were usually made from hard mahogany, with the details painted on. The centre of the back was usually reserved for the armorial bearings or device of the owner.

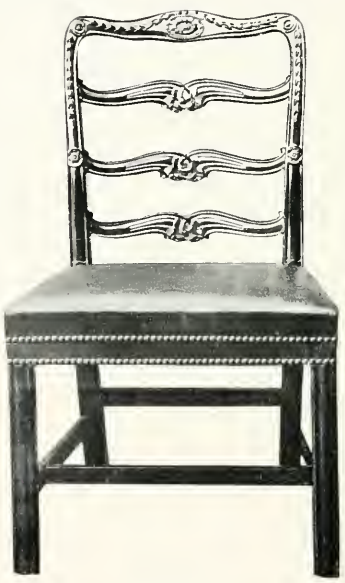

Fig. 230.

MAHOGANY "LADDER-BACK" CHAIR.

3 ft. 2 ins. from floor to top of back.
1 ft. 8½ ins. across front of seat.
1 ft. 6½ ins. depth of seat.

Date about 1775.

Hepplewhite's settees and chairs having thus been illustrated in an orderly progression, it may be useful, before closing this chapter, to shortly summarise the various patterns which have been given as typical of his style. The settees, or sofas, may be divided into two classes—the solid

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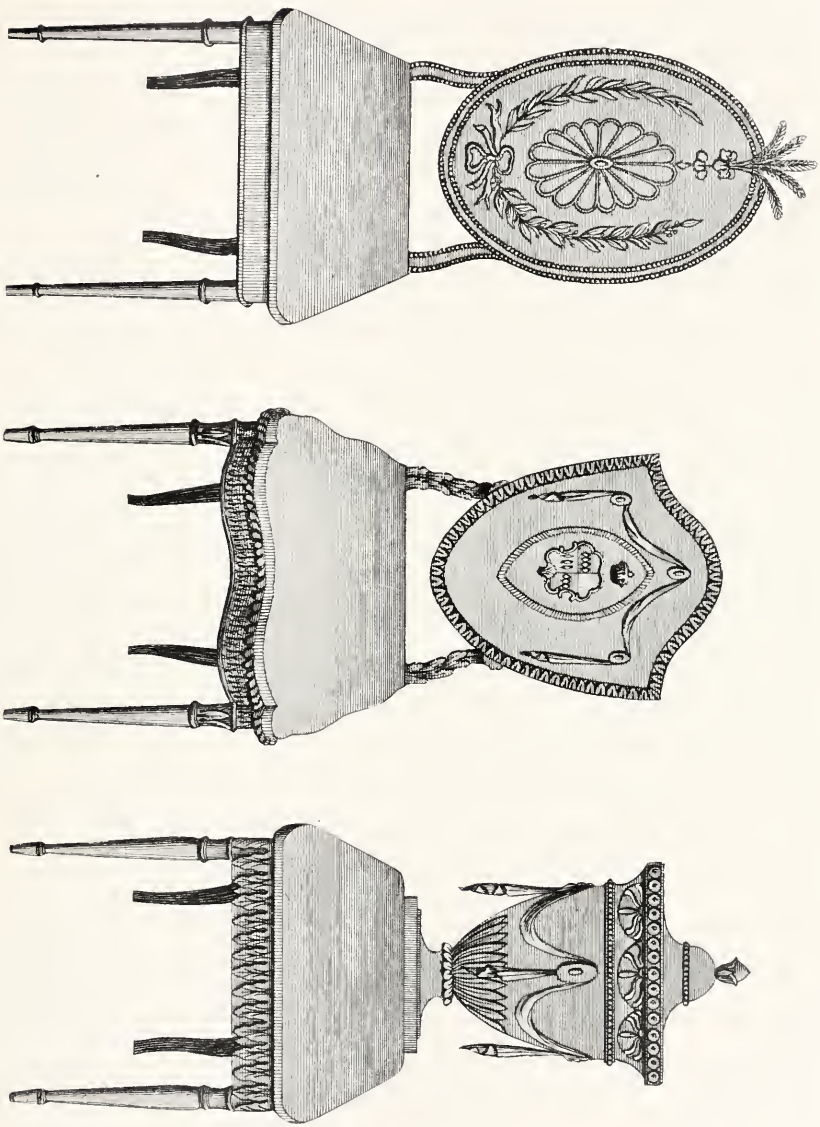

Figs. 231, 232, and 233.

HALL CHAIRS.

Plate 14 in all editions of the *Guide*.

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upholstered, and the open "chair-back," or "bar-back," to use the phrase of the *Guide*. In the first the top line of the back is always shaped, and generally "stuffed-over," and the back and arms are united in one continuous sweep. In the second, all the well-known Hepplewhite chair-back designs are used, either as multiplications of the one pattern, or in combination. These chair-back settees were generally of beech, japanned and decorated, rarely in satinwood, and hardly ever in mahogany. Coupled with the settees must be placed the Hepplewhite window-seats, with or without backs. Of the chairs, if it be permissible to place the various patterns in order of date on somewhat meagre evidence, we can state them in something like the following order: (1) "Serpentine-top, shield-back, central-splat"; (2) "Hoop-back, central-splat"; (3) "Ladder-back," with Adam detail; (4) "Oval-back, central-splat"; (5) "Serpentine-top, shield-back baluster"; (6) "Bow-top, shield-back baluster"; (7) "Interlaced heart"; and (8) "Solid shield-back." There are, of course, numerous variations of each of these patterns, especially in the presence or absence of the stretcher-underframing uniting the legs, but; as a general rule—especially if the designs published in the *Guide* be received with some caution as representing actual pre-existing models—nearly all of the chairs and settees from 1780 to about 1792 can be resolved into one or the other of the types enumerated above.

In spite of the claims which have been made for both Chippendale and Sheraton as designers of chairs—and there is no doubt that their schools produced many notable models—it is to that of Hepplewhite that the palm must be awarded for general high level of design, proportion, and workmanship. Foreign influences were absorbed rather than adopted, with the result that the settees and chairs produced during the years from 1780 to 1792 take their place in the forefront of the furniture produced in England during the latter half of the eighteenth century.

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Chapter XI.

Hepplewhite's French Models.

WE have seen, in the review of the later work of Chippendale, in the second volume of this book, that shortly after 1765-70, French fashions began to assume an ascendency in the metropolis. The dandies of the period dressed in the French fashion, they lisped in the French tongue, and, it is to be feared, imbibed French vices—and proved themselves apt pupils. Even as early as 1742, Henry Fielding had launched the wealth of his satire against this tendency. In *Joseph Andrews*, published in that year, we have the fop Bellarmine, in the story related by the well-bred lady in the coach, who explains to his fiancée, "*Yes, madam; this coat, I assure you, was made at Paris; and I defy the best English tailor even to imitate it. There is not one of them can cut, madam; they can't cut. If you observe how this skirt is turned, and this sleeve; a clumsy English rascal can do nothing like it. Pray how do you like my liveries?*" *Leonora answered she thought them very pretty.* "*All French,*" *says he,* "*I assure you, except the greatcoats; I never trust anything more than a greatcoat to an Englishman. You know one must encourage our own people what one can, especially as before I had a place, I was in the county interest; he, he, he! But for myself, I would see the dirty island at the bottom of the sea, rather than wear a single rag of English work about me; and I am sure, after you have made one tour to Paris, you will be of the same opinion with regard to your own clothes. You can't conceive what an addition a French dress would be to your beauty; I positively assure you, at the first opera I saw since I came over, I mistook the English ladies for chambermaids; he, he, he!*"

This craze for French furniture to match the dresses and customs imported from Paris must have been a powerful one to oblige Chippendale, in the last years of his business career, to cater for the new taste. Hepplewhite appears to have frankly adopted it, in the years preceding the publication of the *Guide*, and it is curious to note that it is precisely this French furniture of Hepplewhite which is the most esteemed of all his work at the present day.

The French taste, as it was styled, dated from the middle of the reign of Louis XV., and after declining towards the close, experienced a revival shortly after the accession of Louis XVI. in 1774, persisting, with more or less favour, until that monarch was beheaded in 1793. The war with the American colonies, which began in 1775, seems to have had the effect of rendering this French craze all the more keen. It is not

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Fig. 234.

HAREWOOD BONHEUR-DU-JOUR.

In the possession of Messrs. Gill & Reigate.

3 ft. 8 ins. high | 3 ft. wide × 1 ft. 6½ ins. depth of table. 9 ins. depth of upper part.

Date about 1780.

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Fig. 235.

MAHOGANY INLAID WRITING TABLE.

2 ft. 3 ins. wide × 2 ft. 6 ins. high × 1 ft. 6½ ins. deep.

Book-rack: 1 ft. 4 ins. high × 7 ins. deep × 2 ft. 2 ins. wide.

Date about 1780.

Fig. 236.

BEECH PAINTED CHAIR.

In the possession of J. D. Phillips, Esq.

2 ft. 9 ins. from floor to top of back.

Seat: 22½ ins. wide × 18 ins. deep.

Height from floor to top of seat, 17½ ins.

Date about 1785.

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Fig. 237.

BEECH PAINTED CHAIR.

In the possession of J. D. Phillips, Esq.

3 ft. 1¾ ins. from floor to top of back.
1 ft. 10½ ins. across front of seat.
1 ft. 8 ins. depth of seat.
1 ft. 5 ins. height of seat.
Oval back: 19½ ins. × 16 ins. outside.

Date about 1780.

Fig. 234 is a good example of the style of furniture which was fashionable from 1780-1788. This table, or *bonheur-du-jour* —the French names were adopted with the style—is veneered with sycamore, stained a greenish grey, and inlaid with floral marqueterie of rosewood and holly. The French fashion of crossbanding has been adopted for the banding of the table and the veneering of the legs, and considerable possible to state with certainty whether this was the first manner of Hepplewhite or no; if so, it is peculiar that for some years mahogany appears to have gone quite out of fashion for furniture, being replaced by gilding, painting, and decoration of flowers and medallions, or by light woods, usually sycamore or chestnut, stained in various ways, generally in a solution of oxide of iron, and commonly known as "hair-wood," "harewood," or "eyre-wood."

Fig. 238.

MAHOGANY CHAIR.

3 ft. 1 in. from floor to top of back.
1 ft. 10 ins. across front of seat.
1 ft. 8½ ins. depth of seat.
1 ft. 5 ins. height of seat.
Oval back: 20½ ins. × 17 ins.

Date about 1785.

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proficiency seems to have been rapidly attained in this laying of cross-cut veneers on shaped surfaces with the veneering hammer. The upper part of this table is fitted with two cupboards—each with a central shelf—and three drawers, and with an open space in the centre, divided laterally with a shelf—for books or china. The long drawers of pieces of this type were generally fitted with a strutted adjustable writing slope, either cloth or leather-lined.

Fig. 235 is a table of similar form to the preceding, with an open, movable bookrack. The table is veneered with mahogany, with bandings of the same wood surrounding panels of satinwood inlaid with marqueterie. The bookrack is also of mahogany, veneered and crossbanded on the edges. The half of the top is hinged, as shown in the illustration, to throw over and extend the width of the top, being supported on the front legs and framing which pull out. The inside of the top is cloth-lined. A table of this kind was usually known as a " Sheveret " in the documents of the period.

There are usually many points, notably in the wood and veneer, the character of the marqueterie, and the general lines, which distinguish this French Hepplewhite furniture from the Parisian models of the same or a slightly earlier date, even when the latter have been frankly imitated, as is frequently the case. In the chairs of this period, however, many of these indications are frequently absent. The frames are generally size-grounded and gilt, or painted white or cream, with the mouldings or the ornament

Fig. 239.
BEECH SETTEE, PAINTED AND GILT.
6 ft. 6 ins. long × 3 ft. 0¼ ins. high.
Date about 1780-85.

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picked out with gold. In an original state, which is highly exceptional, the tone of the gilding is in itself some indication of nationality, the English gold being usually of a ruddy yellow, as compared with the pure lemon-yellow of the French gold of this period. Where, however, the chair has been stripped, which is usually the case, the colour of the gilding offers no indication, the only reliable criterion being that of form, workmanship, or character of the carving, all of which are much more apparent in the actual piece than in the illustration. Fig. 236 is a typical French model, the general form being that of the later Louis Quinze of 1760-70. The chair, however, is made from English beech, now painted, but probably gilded in the original instance. The caning is not original. The squares left at the bases of the arms indicate that the chair was intended to be fitted with a loose squab cushion.

Hepplewhite applied the French curves to the oval-backed arm-chair with conspicuous success, and the two examples given in Figs. 237 and 238 may be described as characteristic of, and peculiar to, his style. In the cresting of Fig. 237 will be noticed the Adam patera and husk, which Hepplewhite so often borrowed and adapted with advantage. This chair is made from beech, painted, and was probably parcel gilt originally, as there is no trace of preparation for the entire gilding of the frame.

In the second of these examples, Fig. 238, the general contour very much resembles that of the preceding, although the covering of the rails of the seat and back has some-

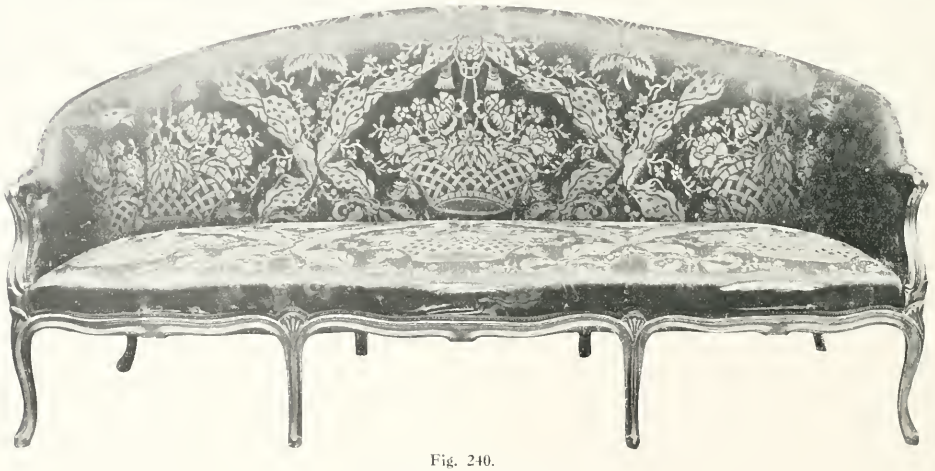

Fig. 240.

MAHOGANY SETTEE.

6 ft. 6 ins. long × 3 ft. 1 in. from floor to top of back.

1 ft. 8 ins. deep.

Date about 1785.

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what marred the general aspect of the chair. This appears, however, to have been the original method, although the chair has been re-covered at a later date.

Hepplewhite's sofas or settees, in the French manner, are among his most successful designs. Fig. 239 has many points of resemblance to the arm-chair, Fig. 237, in the shaping of the front legs and the detail of patera and husks of the top rail. In Fig. 240 the back is stuffed completely over, and the frame is of white beech, prepared and gilt.

The absurd character of the next example,* plate 25 in the first edition of Hepplewhite's *Cabinet-maker and Upholsterer's Guide*, appears to suggest that the inception of the rational Hepplewhite French manner is later than the publication of this book, or that the firm of "A. Hepplewhite & Co." must have been very much at the mercy of the engravers of the period. The preposterous nature of this pattern, and the literal impossibility of its satisfactory execution, must have been felt by the authors of the *Guide*, as it is only found in the first edition, being omitted in the second and third. It will be noticed that the seat has really no depth, as the arms, if carried upwards from the legs, and backwards, would follow the line of the seat on the same level—in fact, would not be arms at all in the true sense of the word. This design probably represents a "fill-up"—in modern parlance—and could not possibly have

Fig. 241.

"FRENCH SOFA."

Plate 25 in the first edition of the *Guide*.
This plate is not found in the second and third editions.

* See p. 167.

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Fig. 242.

MAHOGANY WRITING CHAIR.

In the possession of Alan Mackinnon, Esq.

2 ft. 11 ins. height from floor to top of back.
1 ft. $10\frac{1}{2}$ ins. across front of seat.
1 ft. $7\frac{1}{2}$ ins. depth of seat.
1 ft. 5 ins. height of seat.

Date about 1780.

Fig. 243.

BEECH PAINTED CHAIR.

In the possession of J. D. Phillips, Esq.

3 ft. $0\frac{3}{4}$ in. height from floor to top of back.
1 ft. $11\frac{1}{2}$ ins. width across front of seat.
1 ft. $7\frac{1}{2}$ ins. depth of seat.
Oval of back 20 ins. × $17\frac{1}{2}$ ins. outside.

Date about 1790.

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Fig. 244.

MAHOGANY CHAIR.

In the possession of Messrs. Colling & Young.

3 ft. 0 ins. height to top of back.

1 ft. 6 ins. to top of seat.

1 ft. 11¼ ins. across front of seat.

1 ft. 6 ins. depth of seat.

1 ft. 7½ ins. width across back.

Date about 1785.

Fig. 245.

BEECH GILT CHAIR.

In the possession of J. D. Phillips, Esq.

3 ft. 3¾ ins. from floor to top of back.

2 ft. 1 in. across front of seat.

1 ft. 10½ ins. depth of seat.

Date about 1790.

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been copied from a pre-existing model. It is the one really impracticable design in the three editions of the *Guide*, and is all the more remarkable on this account, as the engravings all suggest that they were carefully copied from actual pieces, and not merely evolved from the imagination of a designer, which is frequently the case with many of the plates in Chippendale's *Director*. This sofa has been illustrated here to show how the French fashions were catered for in 1788. In the text it is referred to as "a design for a sofa in the French taste, covered with a figured damask: the ornaments should be gilt or japanned, of a bright colour." The term "japanned" in this connection is probably used to indicate a cheap form of gilding the carving with bronze powder, a protecting coating of japan gold size being brushed over afterwards to prevent tarnishing.

The association of George Hepplewhite with Robert Adam, either directly in working for the latter or indirectly in being influenced by him, is no doubt responsible for the gradual displacing of the shaped French leg by the turned one which is more closely allied to the general notion of the style of Hepplewhite. The characteristic

Fig. 246.
GILT SETTEE.
In the possession of J. D. Phillips, Esq.
4 ft. 0 ins. wide × 3 ft. 3½ ins. from floor to top of back.
2 ft. 0½ in. depth of seat outside.
Date about 1790.

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French back, several varieties of which are shown in Figs. 242–247, was still retained, in conjunction with the English turned leg, and the combination, which one might have thought would have been fatal from a study of the preceding examples, is very often an exceedingly happy one. The mahogany writing-chair shown in Fig. 242 is obviously an adaptation of the general form of Fig. 236, the design being Anglicised by the omission of the caning in the back and the substitution of the five upright splats, and the exchange of the tapered for the shaped legs. This chair is worthy of careful examination, as a wealth of thought has been spent on its quiet lines and general proportions. The sweeping of the back in oval form, the double curve of the arms finishing on to the tapered legs with the square moulded block feet, giving a very satisfying appearance of stability to the whole chair, are all features worthy of careful observation.

In Fig. 243 we have a recurrence in modified form of Fig. 237, many of the French details of the former being retained. These are noticeable in the small roped moulding surrounding the oval of the back, the ogee sweep of the side rails, and the splay and downward thrust of the back legs. The Adam details of the husk and the fluted seat rail are combined with the turned and tapered legs, carved with the water-leaf decoration which is typical of Hepplewhite.

Fig. 244 introduces a new form of the French back, combined with other details which strongly suggest the hand of Robert Adam himself, the more especially as he designed several very similar models for Osterley Park. In this chair the

Fig. 247.

MAHOGANY CHAIR.

In the possession of J. D. Phillips, Esq.

2 ft. 10¾ ins. height from floor to top of back.

1 ft. 10½ ins. width across front of seat.

1 ft. 7½ ins. depth of seat.

1 ft. 5 ins. height of seat from floor.

Date about 1785.

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springing of the top rail of the back is repeated in the seat rails on front and sides. The central spat is pierced and well carved with a vase-centred lyre above an inverted honeysuckle ornament. The turned legs are fluted and carved with water-leaves, finishing on carved ball-feet, which have somewhat the appearance of having been worn down, although the backward rake of the seat renders this assumption hardly possible, as the back feet are practically intact.

In Fig. 245 we have the French curved back and seat rails allied to the typical Hepplewhite turned and carved leg. The general character of the ornament is a curious mixture of Adam and the early Louis Seize, and several unusual features will be noticed in the design, on close examination. The arms are kept back on to the side rails instead of continuing down to the legs, as in Fig. 243, which is unusual in Hepplewhite chairs with turned legs; the beading on the stuffing line of the seat sweeps round, in a series of curves, over the legs, which do not spring from squares, and the back legs are turned and carved to match those on the front, and are fixed with a curious outward and backward splay. The chair is of beech, and has originally been gilt. The back and arms of the settee, Fig. 246, resemble those of the chair very closely, but the turned legs are of more severe type, and the seat rail is regular, closely fluted, and centred with a plain moulded patera. The combination of the flamboyant French arm with the formal Adam seat rail and simple turned leg is not entirely successful.

In Fig. 247, a mahogany chair, the French character has almost entirely disappeared. The upholstered back is here replaced by a filling of three pierced, upright splats centring in carved marguerite pateræ. The legs are turned, fluted, and "cabled."

The name of Hepplewhite is so closely connected with the "shield back" chair that we are justified in assuming that so successful a design probably evolved at a later date than the French models, and ousted them from favour. There is some evidence for believing that the "shield-back" did not become popular until about 1783-84, and that it owes its origin to Gillows of Lancaster rather than to Hepplewhite of London. This theory will be considered at greater length in a subsequent chapter, when the history and influence of Gillows is examined.

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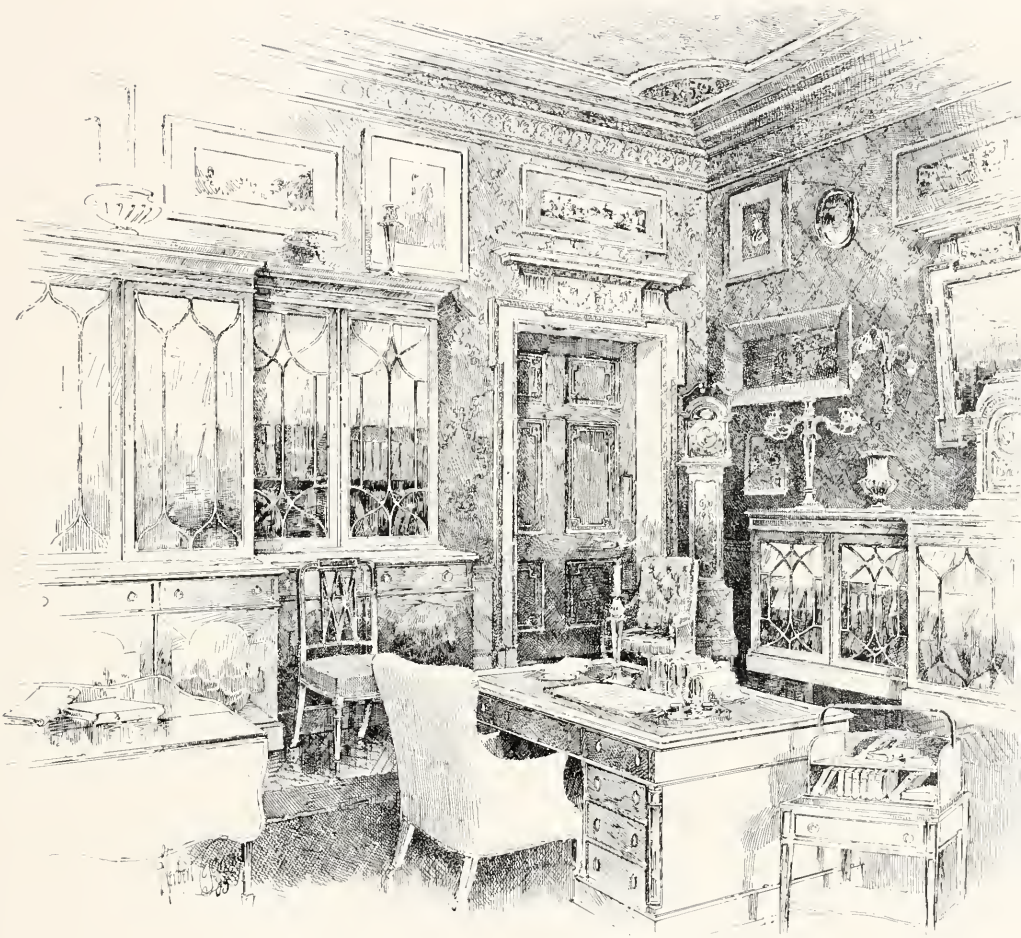

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Chapter XII.

Thomas Sheraton.

OF all the eighteenth century designers of furniture whose work we have to consider, Thomas Sheraton occupies an unique position in the history of our subject. His fifteen years of London life were occupied in the writing and publishing of scriptural tracts and pamphlets, in the designing of furniture, the teaching of drawing and the publication of educational works. By trade a cabinet-maker, he was born at Stockton-on-Tees in 1750, and came to London in his fortieth year. In 1782, at his native place, he had already published a pamphlet on *A Scriptural Illustration of the Doctrine of Regeneration*, in which he refers to himself as a mechanic, without the advantage of an academical education. Sheraton never missed an opportunity of describing himself.

Although he was a practical mechanic, it is more than doubtful if Sheraton ever worked in London as a cabinet-maker, even as a journeyman ; he certainly never was a master-man. His time was too fully occupied as a Baptist preacher, a writer of tracts, a teacher of drawing, a designer and a publisher to have permitted him to devote the necessary attention which a business as a maker of furniture would have demanded. His versatility and impractical character, allied with a peculiar proficiency in the "gentle art of making enemies," is evidently responsible for the fact that Sheraton's London career was one long struggle with poverty. With the boastfulness of modesty which was one of his peculiar characteristics, he was "well content to sit on a wooden bottom chair, with common food and raiment wherewith to pass through life in peace, while racking his invention to design fine cabinet-work."

His chief work, the *Cabinet-maker and Upholsterer's Drawing Book*,* was published in parts, and consists of three divisions, devoted to treatises on geometry, the five orders of architecture, problems in perspective, an appendix and an "accompaniment." Of these, the first two were probably finished before Sheraton left his native town, and many of his subscribers were possibly obtained by personal canvass, during his journey to London. We can imagine Sheraton, in his opinionated way, setting out for the metropolis, with the intention of educating the trade by a course of lessons in drawing, geometry and perspective, a course which should make his name, and incidentally his fortune, as a teacher, only to find that whereas new designs were

* Three editions, in all, were published. The first consisted of 111 plates and text (1791–4), including an appendix ; the second of 119 plates and text (1793) ; and the third of 122 plates and text (1802).

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welcomed, drawing lessons were emphatically not wanted. It is the third part, with the accompaniment and the appendix, which really constitute Sheraton's contribution to the history of English furniture, and the scheme of these was not only suggested, but almost dictated, by his subscribers.

Of this London portion of his book, as it may be described, despite Sheraton's scornful references to Hepplewhite, and his wilful ignoring of the name of Robert Adam, there is no doubt that he was largely influenced by both the *Guide* and the *Works in Architecture*. Hepplewhite had been a fellow-tradesman, and could be reviled with impunity, but the renown of Robert Adam had been so great,—he had been thought worthy of a burial in Westminster Abbey,—that it was wiser to ignore than to mention him. Sheraton was probably under the impression that no accusation of plagiarising the work of a man whom he had dismissed so scornfully as Hepplewhite could ever be levelled against him. Chippendale was referred to in respectful terms, but then he did not borrow from him. It is a peculiarity of human nature that our bitterest enemies are those whom we have ourselves injured. Thomas Chippendale had been dead eleven years; his style was obsolete, and the glories of the St. Martin's Lane firm were on the wane, whereas the *Guide* had been published but a few years before,—the last edition is later than the first part of the *Drawing Book*,—and the demand for Hepplewhite's work was at its height in spite of the fact that the founder of the firm had been dead four years.

The quality of so-called authentic Sheraton furniture is so unequal that the conclusion is irresistible that the making up of his designs was left to the cabinet-makers who had subscribed to his book. Five hundred and twenty-two names are given in the list, and there were probably others who bought the book after publication or borrowed it from those who possessed copies, so the source of supply of "Sheraton" furniture is a wide one. The design for the Chinese drawing-room at Carlton House, given at the end of the *Drawing Book*, was merely by way of a suggestion, as the name of Sheraton does not figure in the preserved records * of the expenditure for the refurnishing of that residence.

In the first years of the nineteenth century Sheraton followed the popular taste for the "English Empire" of Thomas Hope, and in the *Cabinet Dictionary* of 1803 several designs in the new manner are given. He must have had considerable contempt for these productions, as Sheraton was undeniably gifted with a discriminating eye, but he was evidently at the mercy of his patrons, the cabinet-makers of his day.

In 1803 he projected the *Cabinet-maker, Upholsterer, and General Artists' Encyclopædia*, to be completed in 125 folio numbers, and in the following year the first

* Supplies were voted by Parliament for the purpose.

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part appeared. A certain Adam Black, a bookseller's apprentice, had journeyed to London from Edinburgh in 1804, and he assisted Sheraton in the preparation of the Encyclopædia. This poor apprentice lived to found one of the most famous publishing houses, Adam and Charles Black,—the publishers of the *Britannica*,—in Soho Square.

In 1793 Sheraton occupied a house at 41 Davies Street, Berkeley Square, removing to 106 Wardour Street in 1795. His last years were spent at 8 Broad Street, Golden Square.

Scriptural treatises and pamphlets appear from his pen at various times: in fact, his thoughts seem to have been equally divided between religion and furniture.

On the 22nd of October 1806 the end came. Worn out with over-work, bad luck, and the bitterness of failure and disappointment, in dilapidated Broad Street, over a meagre shop, died Thomas Sheraton, preacher, author, publisher, teacher, cabinet-maker, and possibly one of the greatest, and certainly the last, of the designers of the eighteenth century, at the age of fifty-five. Perhaps his versatility may have accounted in some measure for his lack of success, but the "Little Corporal" had already begun to leave his mark on Europe, and the times were surely changing for the worse, as far as our greatest designer of cabinet-work was concerned.

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Chapter XIII.

Thomas Sheraton: His Style and his Work.

THOMAS SHERATON occupies an exceptional position in the history of English furniture, as, although his actual influence on the design of his day was very considerable, he has been popularly credited with so much which really does not belong to him at all. In the case of Thomas Chippendale we had to deal with a fashionable cabinet-maker, well-established, and employing some thirty or forty people in the realisation of his ideas. His published designs represented pieces which he had either actually made, or did make subsequently, or, at all events, were in the style which he followed in his productions. It was pointed out, at the time when his work was considered, that when a noted maker collected all the available designs which he could either create or borrow, it was in the nature of things that after the lapse of a century and a half his style should have a retrospective bearing—in other words, that when he copied pieces of some ten or twenty years previous to his day, or assimilated many of the designing peculiarities of that period, it became impossible, after a sufficient lapse of time, to differentiate between his work and the earlier models which he copied, and thus his style had to be extended to include other furniture, possibly made even before he commenced his business career. With Robert Adam we have not this retrospection, as the style associated with his name was such a novelty at the date of his return from Italy that it did not develop, even in his own hands, until some years later. In his case, however, we had to deal with a designer purely and simply—one who made no furniture himself, but employed the cabinet-makers of his day to a considerable extent, and thus acted as whilom mentor to those whom he patronised. With this education of cabinet-makers,—as Robert Adam was the final judge of all the furniture which they made to his order, and probably played the part of critic while the work was in progress,—it was not to be wondered at that after a time they became the real exponents of the "Adam style," influencing its creator to even a larger extent than he had affected them. The Adam style was, therefore, justifiably held to cover much more than the designs of the "Adelphi" or the work made to their order, and included all the furniture productions exhibiting the influence of the manner of which they were the pioneers.

With George Hepplewhite we had a practical cabinet-maker, an employer of labour, one either possessing considerable artistic skill or capable of retaining it in his employ, entering the field as the champion of inlay as against carving, and demonstrating the

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value of the lighter woods such as satinwood, tulip, sycamore and the like, as compared with mahogany. There is no furniture until the advent of the "English Empire" of Sheraton and Hope, at the very close of the century, the general style of which had not been accepted or anticipated by Chippendale, Adam, or Hepplewhite, to say nothing of the makers of lesser note such as Johnson, Crunden, Manwaring, Lock, Casement, Shearer and others. The question, therefore, arises, what can be placed to the credit of Thomas Sheraton? If he worked as a cabinet-maker in London at all,—which is exceedingly doubtful,—it was certainly not as an employer of labour; he may have been a master working single-handed, but even this is not probable. As we have seen in the previous chapter, he came to London in 1790; he was dead at the end of the year 1806. We are dealing, therefore, with a period of only fifteen years, and as the scope of this book stops short at the inartistic barbarities of the so-called "English Empire," a style which Sheraton followed in his later designing work, we have to reduce this period by, at least, another five years. Now let us examine his career during this period. He figures as a preacher, a writer of tracts and treatises, a teacher of drawing, a designer, a publisher and a bookseller, but there are no records of him as a maker of furniture. He had no workshop worthy of the name at Davies Street, Wardour Street, or Broad Street, and if he produced any furniture at all, no records appear to have been preserved which are worthy of more than a mere cursory examination. So-called "Sheraton" pieces do exist, with pedigrees attached,—the writer has seen several during the past fifteen years,—but it is curious that either the workmanship and design of these pieces is obviously later, or beneath contempt, or the "pedigree" has obviously no relation to the article whose history it purports to relate. The puzzling question therefore remains: what credit is due to Thomas Sheraton, and what is the place he occupies in the history of English furniture designing? and the reply must be, in the very forefront. We have been so inclined to overvalue the creator of styles, and to regard him as one who evolved, or rather created, new designs from no antecedent sources, that the greatest educator of our eighteenth century cabinet-makers has been in danger of being disregarded. The character of Sheraton himself may have accounted, in large measure, for this neglect. He was evidently possessed of a narrow and bigoted mind, assertive and unsuccessful—the two are often found in combination—cantankerous in his poverty and gifted with a venomous tongue and pen, both of which he never hesitated to use in disparagement of those more successful than himself. He was unfortunate; with his nature, had he started at the topmost rung of the commercial ladder, he would, doubtless, have remained there; but for an age of pandering, of dallying in the antechambers of the wealthy, seeking patronage and meeting only with the gibes of lacqueys and underlings, Sheraton was distinctly ill-fitted. The world, then as now, disliked the

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poor man of many parts; it was dangerous to encourage him. A wealthy patron to foster the cabinet-maker and to find that he has assisted a pamphleteer, a seditious man, unawares! A poor man may be excellent at one thing; he cannot be even a passable master of some half dozen! And so poor Sheraton pined—or more probably reviled—in neglect. He had his victory, however, but alas! it was a posthumous one. Our present age has the happy facility of appraising a genius—providing he be comfortably laid in his grave for some half a century or so—by the measure of his misfortune, and Sheraton has been thus elevated, not below his real merit, possibly, but for qualities he did not possess, and for services to English furniture he did not perform, to the total neglect of those he did have, and exercised for the benefit of the cabinet-makers of his day.

It is often better to explain problems of this nature by analogy. To those who have studied the general lines of the furniture produced in London from 1895 to 1910 a great improvement is immediately apparent, not in design,—as in all essentials no particular change has taken place,—but in a better idea of the beauty of a line, the massing and use of ornament and the refinement of proportions. Not one but many designers have collectively influenced this result, one correcting a line here, another rectifying a proportion there. Here a cabinet-maker has discovered the decorative value of fine veneer, there mere commercial considerations have suppressed redundant ornament. These collective influences have resulted in a marked improvement in the general design of the furniture produced in our day, without any call for special creative effort on the part of any single individual. This appears to have been precisely the part which Thomas Sheraton played when he arrived in London. Although his drawings of furniture would be regarded, at the present day, as examples of poor draughtsmanship,—conventions in perspective being very pronounced during the eighteenth century,—they constituted a material advance on anything which had been hitherto attempted. Sheraton's *Drawing Book* had a considerable sale, especially among members of his own trade—he probably acted as a peddler of his own books—and its effect on the cabinet-makers of the time must have been relatively great. His designs of chairs show actual originality, but in general cabinet-work he acted rather as collector and editor of the models which were current at his day. The *Drawing Book* is, of course, the sole measure by which we can gauge the degree of Sheraton's designing skill, and before attempting a matured judgment, it is necessary to mentally translate his drawings into actuality. During the last twenty years, however, the taste for reproductions from the antique has resulted in nearly every one of his patterns being copied, and a careful study of these enables Sheraton's designs to be judged with a more just and critical eye than was possible before. The resulting

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verdict must be that Sheraton inaugurated a distinct style of his own, often characterised by minute differences of line and proportion from that of Hepplewhite, but in the main quite peculiar to himself. He suffers, in the actual pieces made during his lifetime, to his designs, but by other makers, from the fact that the resolving of his creations into wood was often beyond his direct control, but the system of long apprenticeship and "working through the shop" which was general during the last quarter of the eighteenth century resulted in the fostering of a natural taste among the workmen of that period, which was always capable of appreciating, if not of originating.

The purpose of the following review of the work of Thomas Sheraton, or rather that which was designed in his style, is to show these apparently trifling distinctions which enable us to differentiate between this and the earlier work from which he undoubtedly drew much, if not the whole, of his inspirations.

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Chapter XIV.

"The Cabinet-maker and Upholsterer's Drawing Book."*

F all the books of design published during the latter half of the eighteenth century, Sheraton's *Drawing Book* stands alone, in several important particulars. In the first place, those cabinet-makers who had published their designs before Sheraton came to London, had all one object in common—the advertisement of their wares and of themselves. Chippendale's *Director*, Ince & Mayhew's *System*, Manwaring's *Real Friend*, Hepplewhite's *Guide*, and a host of similar books, were all really trade catalogues, intended to foster and assist the business of their authors or publishers. Sheraton, however, was the exception ; he had no business to advertise, unless it were that of a teacher of drawing. It is doubtful if he worked, even as a journeyman cabinet-maker, during his fifteen years of life in London ; he certainly never was a master-man. There is no book of this class which bears such indisputable internal evidences of the character of the author as the *Drawing Book*. Let us consider the circumstances attending its publication, for a moment. Sheraton did not leave his native place, Stockton-on-Tees, until 1790 ; the first quarto parts of the *Drawing Book* appeared in London within twelve months. Apart from the actual work of writing the text, making and engraving the plates and printing the parts, 717 advance subscribers were obtained in London and the provinces, accounting for 782 copies. Whether these all continued their subscriptions until the work was completed, is more than doubtful, as we shall see. These subscribers must, nearly all, have been procured by personal canvass, possibly by Sheraton himself ; there was no other practicable method. Circularising was out of the question ; the postage would have been too expensive an item in 1790, and the appeal would have been ineffectual in so large a number of instances. Advertising, as it is understood at the present day, was impossible ; there were no journals of adequate circulation, even if Sheraton could have borne the expense. There is some evidence, in the list itself, that the canvass must have been a personal one ; many important towns are excluded ; others, such as Wakefield, yield nearly a dozen subscribers. London appears to have been thoroughly worked, although there are some significant exceptions, the names of Hepplewhite and Gillow both being absent. There is a legend extant that Sheraton designed furniture for Gillows, but had this been a fact their name would almost certainly have figured in this list.† Some notable names appear, such as Campbell and

* Part of the subject matter of this chapter has already appeared in the form of an article in the *Burlington Magazine*, December 1911.

† One subscriber is given as "London House." This may refer to Gillows, as these lists of subscribers were frequently very carelessly prepared.

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Son, "Cabinet-makers to the Prince of Wales," Mary-le-bone Street, London; Charles Elliott, "Upholsterer to His Majesty and Cabinet-maker to the Duke of York," New Bond Street; and — France, "Cabinet-maker to His Majesty," St. Martin's Lane. The names of others are instructive in themselves; thus "Dillon, Cabinet-maker, Russia," subscribed for one copy. Some influence, more powerful and far-reaching than Sheraton's could have ever been, must have operated here. "Horwell, Sculptor," is another subscriber, described as of "College Street, Camden Town, *near London*." Lepard, Smith and Lepard, Paper Manufacturers, of Newgate Street, take a copy; perhaps also the order for the paper. They may, also, have financed the undertaking; if so, they have survived to the present day with no greater vicissitude than a removal of their business to Great Earl Street. "J. Lane, Knife-case maker, 44 St. Martin's-le-Grand," appears to show that the age of specialisation had already been reached in 1790, and "Peter Reid, Grocer and Tea Dealer, Whitehaven," suggests that Sheraton must have been an invincible canvasser for his own publications. To obtain 717 subscribers, of whom fully 90 per cent. were cabinet-makers or directly connected with the trade, was no mean achievement, even for a Baptist preacher, as money was hardly a superfluity among cabinet-makers at this date,—or even at the present day. It is somewhat pathetic to compare Chippendale's stately dedication to the Earl of Northumberland, and his subscription list containing many noble and historical names, and the books of Robert Adam, taken up almost exclusively by the nobility, with poor Sheraton's *Drawing Book* subscribed for almost entirely by members of his own trade, with an occasional sprinkling of grocers, mahogany merchants, engravers and teachers of drawing. Of the latter, the title of the book does not appear to have captivated many.

There appears to have been a fair demand, at this date, for designs of furniture; and Sheraton, in his preface and prospectus,—upon the strength of which most of his subscribers were obviously obtained, as the book was published in part form,—must have aroused great expectations. The title could have conveyed little; it was the age when "Real Friends," "Systems," "Directors," and "Cabinet-makers' Darlings" were published. What the trade demanded, and expected, was new designs; something to please their customers and bring new patronage; what they got was actually a *Drawing Book*. Sheraton was too anxious to exhibit his abilities as a teacher,—of drawing, scripture, anything so long as he could occupy a rostrum,—to care much for popular demand. Thus six sections, 119 pages in all, are devoted to a preface,—in which Sheraton vents his spleen on other cabinet-makers, Hepplewhite in particular,—a list of subscribers, and a treatise on geometry; 56 more pages follow, dealing with the five orders of architecture,—a subject which had already been thrashed to death by many of the earlier design books. The scheme could hardly have satisfied the 717 subscribers,

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nearly all of whom were tradesmen ; even the "Grocer and Tea Dealer" of Whitehaven must have been disappointed.

The second part, consisting of 173 pages, is devoted to perspective lessons, much needed even by Sheraton himself, as the bookcase in Plate XXVI. is drawn, apparently, about fifteen feet high. Before the third part appeared, Sheraton must have received some broad hints from his patrons as to the kind of work they expected, as he devotes an introduction to pouring oil—in Sheraton's case it was more frequently vinegar—on troubled waters.

It shows the impractical character of Sheraton that he not only neglects the material advantage to himself either as a designer or a cabinet-maker, which might have accrued, by the publication of a book of designs of furniture intended to please the taste of wealthy patrons, but he also comments, in scornful language, on the fact that the books of other cabinet-makers before referred to, do not waste valuable space in idle treatises on geometry and perspective, to the neglect of the business aim for which they were specifically published.

Sheraton disdained the advantage of making friends, even among his own trade, upon which his livelihood presumably depended. The following extracts from the preface to the *Drawing Book* show the bid which he made for fame—and for popularity.

"As I have alluded to some books of designs, it may be proper here just to say something of them. I have seen one which seems to have been published before Chippendale's. I infer this from the antique appearance of the furniture, for there is no date to it ; but the title informs us that it was composed by a Society of Cabinetmakers in London. It gives no instructions for drawing in any form, but we may venture to say, that those who drew the designs wanted a good share of teaching themselves."

"Chippendale's book seems to be the next in order to this, but the former is without comparison to it, either as to size or real merit. Chippendale's book has, it is true, given us the proportions of the Five Orders, and lines for two or three cases, which is all it pretends to relative to rules for drawing ; and as for the designs themselves, they are now wholly antiquated and laid aside, though possessed of great merit, according to the times in which they were executed. . . ."

"In the year 1788 was published the 'Cabinet-maker's and Upholsterer's Guide,' in which are found no directions for drawing in any form, nor any pretensions to it. The whole merit of the performance rests on the designs, with a short description to each plate prefixed. Some of these designs are not without merit, although it is evident that the perspective is, in some instances, erroneous. But, notwithstanding the late date of

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Hepplewhite's book, if we compare some of the designs, particularly the chairs, with the newest taste, we shall find that this work has already caught the decline, and perhaps, in a little time, will suddenly die in the disorder. This instance may serve to convince us of that fate which all books of the same kind will ever be subject to. Yet it must be owned, that books of this sort have their usefulness for a time; and when through change of fashions they are become obsolete, they serve to show the taste of former times."

Considering that the preface to the *Drawing Book* was written in 1792, and that the latest edition of the *Guide* was within a year of the same date, this reference to the "taste of former times" is, to say the least, somewhat cool. But Sheraton had his spleen to vent, for some reason, on Hepplewhite, and in the next paragraph in the preface he refers to the *Cabinet-maker's London Book of Prices*,—in which, by the way, some of the plates are signed by Hepplewhite, and are presumably his work,—in the following terms. "*. . . it certainly lays claim to merit, and does honour to the publishers. Whether they had the advantage* of seeing Hepplewhite's book before theirs was published I know not; but it may be observed, with justice, that their designs are more fashionable and useful than his, in proportion to their number.*"

Sheraton's lofty tone of superiority does not desert him, even when he is threatened with the loss of subscribers. Thus in the introduction to the third part, before referred to, he states: "*The design of this Part of the Book is intended to exhibit the present taste of furniture, and at the same time to give the workman some assistance in the manufacturing part of it.*"

"*I am sensible, however, that several persons who have already encouraged the work, will not want any help of this nature; but it is presumed many will who are not much conversant in the business, and who have had no opportunity of seeing good pieces of furniture executed.*"

"*For the advantage of such, it is hoped that the experienced workman will exercise candour and patience in reading the instructions intended, not for himself, but for those now mentioned.*"

"*There are few but what may, with propriety, reflect on their own past ignorance, even in things which afterwards become exceeding simple and easy by a little practice and experience. . . .*"

"*. . . But in every branch there are found men who love to keep their inferiors of the same profession in ignorance, that themselves may have an opportunity of triumphing over them. From such I expect no praise, but the reverse. Their pride will not suffer them to*

* "This is not meant to insinuate any disrespectful idea of the abilities of those who drew the designs in the *Cabinet-maker's Book of Prices*. I doubt not that they were capable of doing more than Hepplewhite has done, without the advantage of seeing his book; and it may be, for anything I know, that the advantage was given on their side."

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encourage any work which tends to make others as wise as themselves; and therefore it is their fixed resolution to despise and pour contempt upon every attempt of this kind, in proportion as it is likely to succeed. But those I will leave to themselves as unworthy of notice, who only live to love themselves, but not to assist others."

The above was probably Sheraton's reply to certain remarks made by a section of his public to the scheme of his book. The fact that they paid the piper, and were entitled, to some extent, to call the tune, did not occur to him. That some such strictures were passed is evident by the continuation.

"Here I would beg leave to observe, that it is natural for every man under a heavy burden to pour out his complaint to the first sympathizing friend he meets with. If the reader be one of these, I will pour out mine, by informing him of the difficult task I have had to please all, and to suit the various motives which different persons have for encouraging a publication like this."

"I find some have expected such designs as never were seen, heard of, nor conceived in the imagination of man; whilst others have wanted them to suit a broker's shop, to save them the trouble of borrowing a bason-stand to shew to a customer. Some have expected it to furnish a country wareroom, to avoid the expence of making up a good bureau, and double chest of drawers, with canted corners, &c., and though it is difficult to conceive how these different qualities could be united in a book of so small a compass, yet, according to some reports, the broker himself may find his account in it, and the country master will not be altogether disappointed; whilst others say many of the designs are rather calculated to shew what may be done, than to exhibit what is or has been done in the trade. According to this, the designs turn out to be on a more general plan than what I intended them, and answer, beyond my expectation, the above various descriptions of subscribers. However, to be serious, it was my first plan, and has been my aim through the whole, to make the book in general as permanently useful as I could, and to unite with usefulness the taste of the times; but I could never expect to please all in so narrow a compass: for to do this, it would be necessary to compose an entire book, for each class of subscribers, and after all there would be something wanting still."

In spite of the elephantine humour displayed in the above, it is evident that many of the subscribers to the *Drawing Book* expected something different to treatises on geometry, perspective, and the "Five Orders." With Sheraton, to ask was not to get, but the withholding of subscriptions was an argument which even he was forced to appreciate. The third part, therefore, is devoted to furniture designs, accompanied by a totally unnecessary description of the methods of manufacture, considering nearly all of his subscribers were practical tradesmen.

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Further pressure from the same source was evidently responsible for the Appendix to the *Drawing Book*, consisting of 32 plates, with the descriptions, and technical lectures still further abridged. Sheraton's subscribers evidently wanted designs, not texts or sermons. From this point of view, the *Guide* of Hepplewhite must have been a much better investment than the *Drawing Book*, and only 36 additional names of subscribers are given in the Appendix, which was published from his house at 106 Wardour Street, Soho, in 1793.

Many of Sheraton's descriptions of his illustrations are naïve, even to the point of absurdity. Thus, of the "Elliptic Bed," the first plate in the Appendix, he states: "*As fancifulness seems most peculiar to the taste of females, I have therefore assigned the use of this bed for a single lady, although it will equally accommodate a single gentleman.*" One might almost have guessed this, although what sane person would prefer a bed of elliptical form to one of the ordinary rectangular shape, it is difficult to imagine. One is lost in wonder as to how the bed-clothes would be disposed on a bed of this shape. For sheer pompous absurdity the thirteen pages of description devoted to the "English State Bed" illustrated in Plate XIX. would be difficult to equal, although the explanation of the meaning of his frontispiece to the whole book may almost be bracketed with it.

It is idle to speculate, although it would be interesting to know, how many of the 717 original subscribers for the parts managed to survive Sheraton's rhetoric, and to eventually possess the complete book. Sheraton owes so much of his renown to his brother cabinet-makers, who adopted his designs and gave them a permanent existence in the flesh, or rather in the wood, that it is impossible to say whether or no the *Drawing Book* would have lived had the sale been entirely among the noble and wealthy classes of his day. That he did much for the improvement of English furniture is unquestionable, and it is the measure and value of this which it is proposed to consider, at some length, in the following chapter.

Before, however, finally leaving the subject of Sheraton's *Drawing Book*, it may be of some value to make an examination of certain of the designs, together with Sheraton's own description of them, and his directions for the cabinet-maker (these latter sure indications that he was designing for others, and not for a workshop of his own), and to see what available information can be thus gleaned. We can commence with the writing-table, Plate 30 in the *Drawing Book*, here reproduced in Fig. 249. Sheraton describes it thus:—

OVAL WRITING-TABLE

"*This piece is intended for a gentleman to write on, or to stand or sit to read at, having*

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desk-drawers at each end, and is generally employed in studies or library-rooms. It has already been executed for the Duke of York, excepting the desk-drawers, which are here added as an improvement.

"The style of finishing it ought to be in the medium of that which may be termed plain or grand, as neither suits their situation. Mahogany is the most suitable wood, and the ornaments should be carved or inlaid, what little there is; japanned ornaments are not suitable, as these tables frequently meet with a little harsh usage."

From the sense in which the term "japanned ornaments" is used in the above, it appears to have been the name given to applied ornament of composition, the "japanning" implying that the enrichment was painted or gilded, which, considering the nature of the material, would be a logical necessity. It is interesting to notice how this term, which in the earlier part of the eighteenth century applied exclusively to lacquer-work, had come to be employed to designate a covering surface of varnish-paint, or even gilding. We shall see at a later stage that japanned furniture was the name generally applied to that which was made from inferior wood, such as birch and beech, and painted over. Even at the present day, the inferior painting and rough graining which is used in finishing rough kitchen or servants' bedroom furniture is known in the

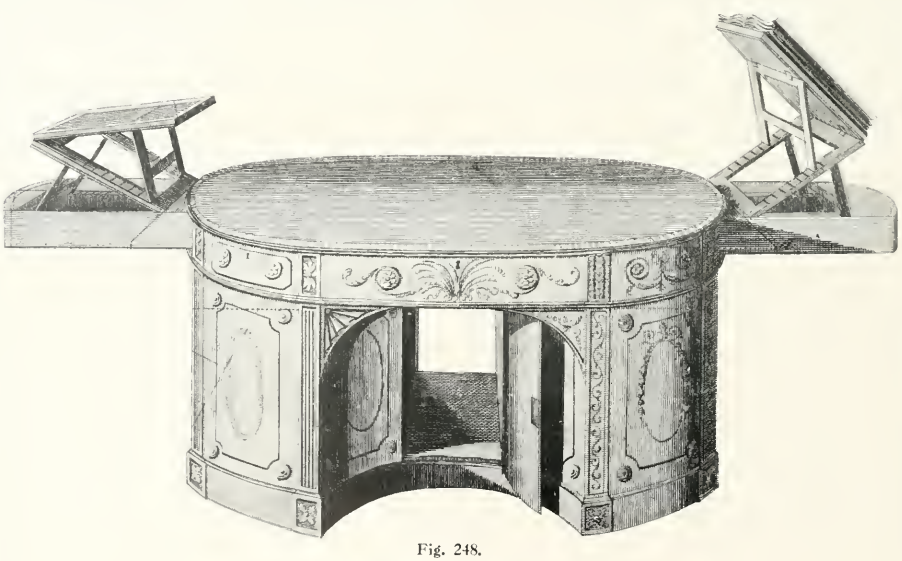

Fig. 248.
"A LIBRARY TABLE."
Plate 30 of the *Drawing Book*.

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trade as japanning, possibly a survival of the eighteenth-century name. Fig. 249 shows the table illustrated in the *Drawing Book* made in satinwood, and inlaid, which, with all respect to Sheraton, is the only logical wood for the design.

The next interesting pair of designs occurs on Plate 39 of the *Drawing Book* (Figs. 251 and 252), as there is sufficient evidence, to the eye of a cabinet-maker, to show that these knife-cases have been engraved from pre-existing models. Sheraton himself supplies the clue, thus :—

NOTE TO KNIFE-CASE

"*As these cases are not made in regular cabinet shops, it may be of service to mention where they are executed in the best taste, by one who makes it his main business ;* i.e. *John Lane, No. 44 St. Martin's-le-Grand, London.*"

If the above be not a mere vulgar trade puff, Sheraton must have been unacquainted with the manufacture of these knife-cases, as they were "not made in regular cabinet shops," and he was probably indebted to the said John Lane for his ideas. The designs, however, are undoubtedly his own, and were probably furnished by Sheraton to Lane,

Fig. 249.

INLAID SATINWOOD TABLE.

4 ft. 0 ins. long · 2 ft. 8½ ins. deep · 2 ft. 6 ins. high.

The same design as illustrated in Fig. 248.

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an original subscriber to the *Drawing Book*. The above is instructive, however, as supplying another item of positive evidence that Sheraton, during his London career, was a designer rather than a cabinet-maker. We find references to other makers, but never to himself in this capacity, an unthinkable omission on the part of Sheraton had he really possessed a workshop.

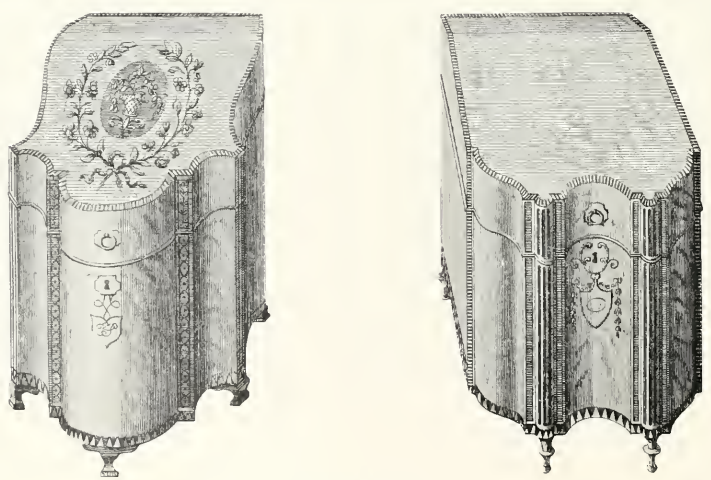
Sheraton's state beds are among his least original creations. One illustration is given, Plate 45 in the *Drawing Book* (Fig. 252), which is representative of the others. It will be noticed that the influence of Robert Adam is very apparent in the general design, and a reproduction from the original sketch in the Soane Museum for the state bed made for Osterley Park is given in the next illustration (Fig. 253) for the purpose of comparison. The latter shows the intention of Robert Adam, and is therefore better for our present purpose than a photograph of the original bed would be, as the latter was considerably modified in the making.

Of this Plate 45, Sheraton writes :—

"*Beds of this kind have been introduced of late with great success in England.*"

He nowhere hints that the bed was made to an order, either by himself or any of the "Upholders" whose names figure so largely in his list of subscribers, nor have we any suggestion as to his indebtedness to Adam.

There are several noticeable peculiarities in the plate of the cabinet illustrated in



Figs. 250 and 251.
KNIFE-CASES.
From Plate 39 of the *Drawing Book*.

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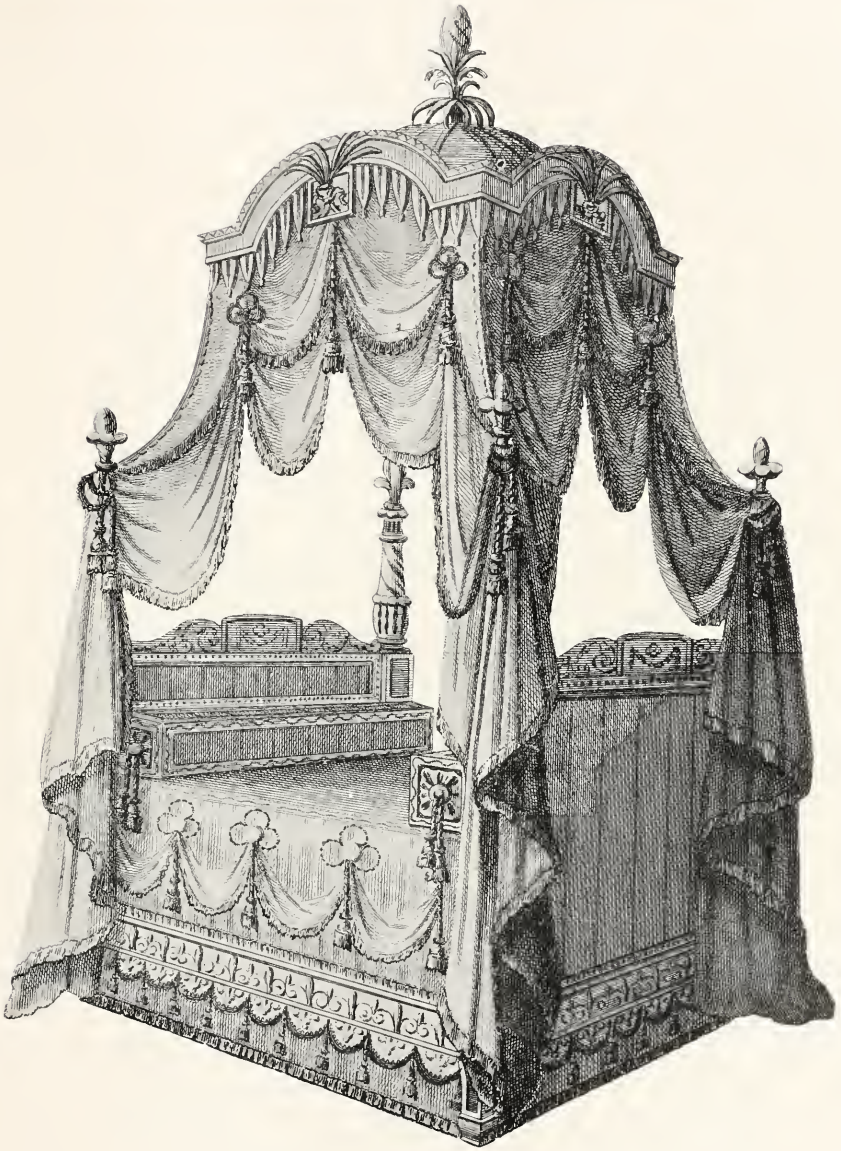

Fig. 252.

"A FRENCH STATE BED."

Plate 45 of the *Drawing Book*.

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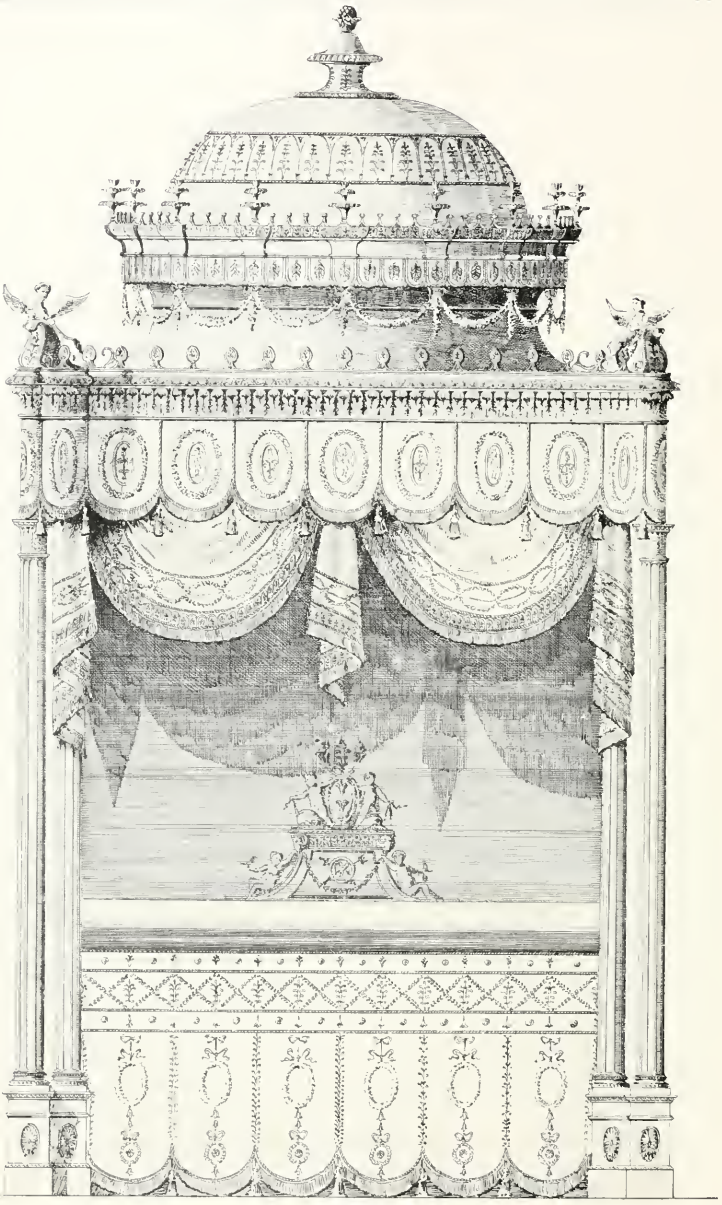

Fig. 253.

ROBERT ADAM'S DESIGN FOR A BED AT OSTERLEY PARK.

Reproduced from the original drawing in the Soane Museum.

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Fig. 254. In the *Drawing Book* it is unnumbered, placed between Nos. 49 and 50. It lacks the usual subscription, "Published as the Act directs by T. Sheraton," with the date, which is found under every other plate in the book, and even the "T. Sheraton del.," in the bottom left-hand corner, has the appearance of having been scratched in on the plate after it was engraved. It is referred to as No. 48 in the text, a piece "*to accommodate a lady, with conveniences for writing, reading, and holding her trinkets, and other articles of that kind. The style of finishing them is elegant, being often richly japanned,*

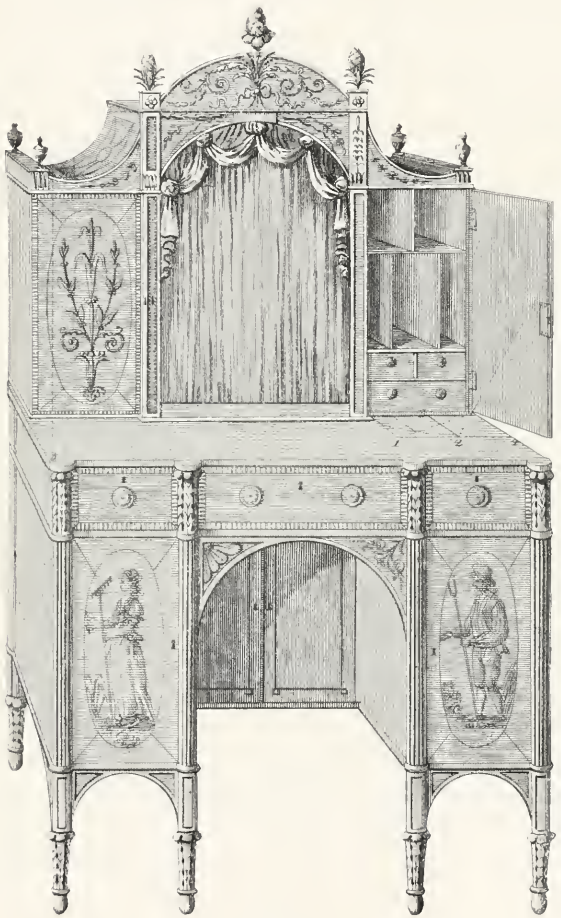

Fig. 254.

"A CABINET."

Plate 48 (?) of the *Drawing Book*.

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and veneered with the finest satinwood." The design itself is typically Sheraton, and is one of his most successful efforts.

The next illustration (Fig. 255) is the well-known "Carlton House Table," which has generally been attributed to Sheraton as his original creation. It would be out of place here, and would involve needless recapitulation at a later stage, to discuss the genesis of this design at any length, as in a later chapter on the work of "Gillows of London and Lancaster" this "Carlton House Table" will be again referred to. To Sheraton is probably due the credit of modifying the design by introducing the hollow flaps over the ink drawers on either side, although by so doing he has succeeded in doubling the work in the table, as compared with other variations of the same design which were made by Gillows, and which will be referred to at a later stage. Many of our present-day cabinet-makers have found this out to their cost. The legend that this table first acquired its name by being made for George IV. when Regent, must be dismissed as a fable. Such a table may have been made for Carlton House, but the design, in modified form, was a well-known one many years before, as there is abundant evidence to show.

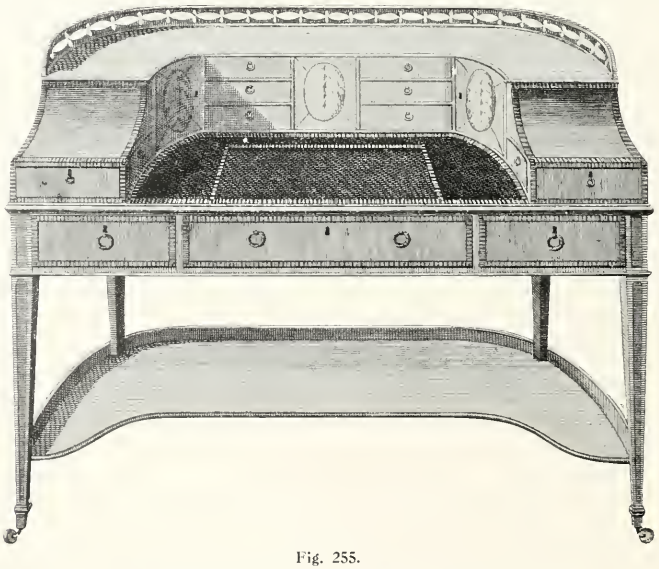

Fig. 255.

"A LADY'S DRAWING AND WRITING TABLE."

A design from Plate 60 of the *Drawing Book*.

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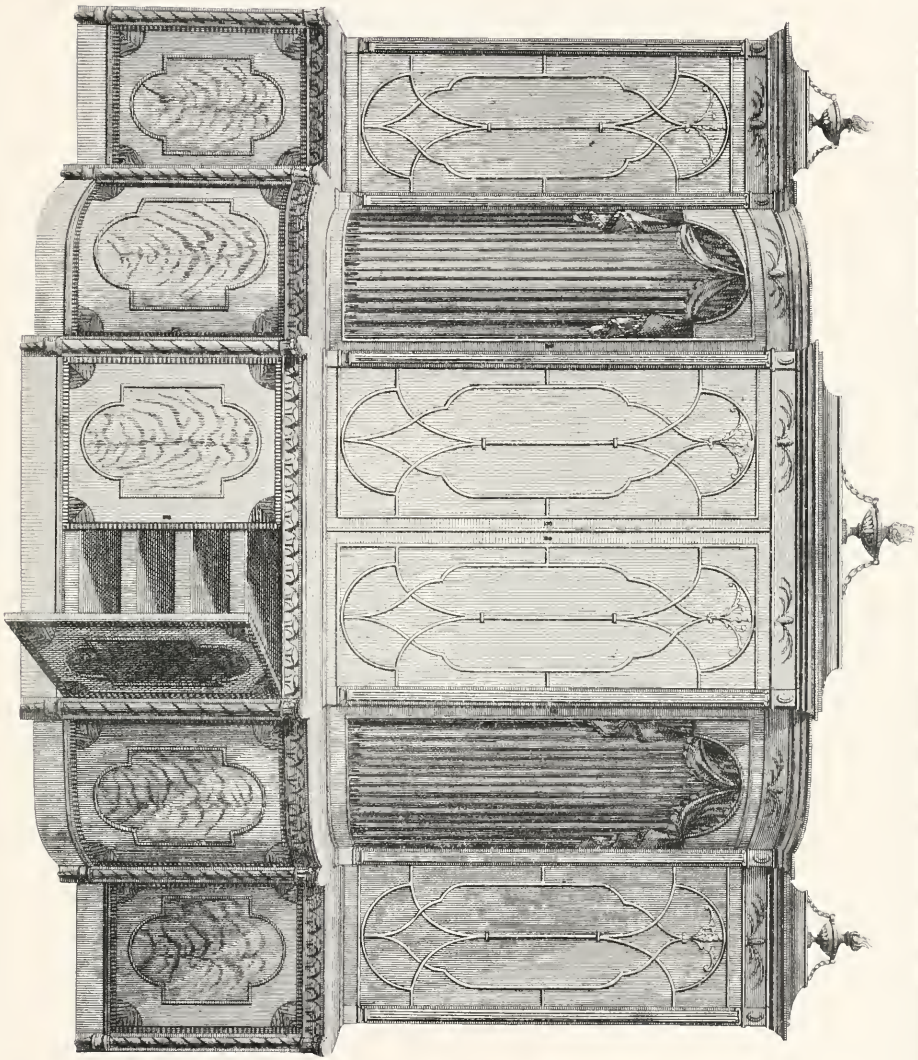

Fig. 256.

"A LIBRARY CASE."

Plate 3 in the Appendix to the *Drawing Book*.

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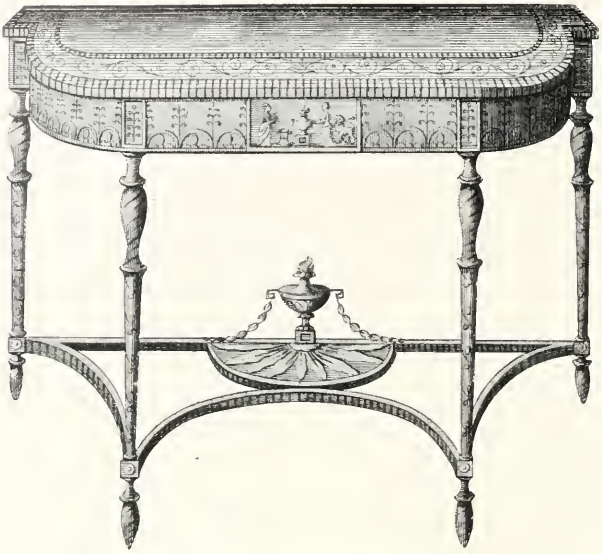

Figs. 257 and 258.

PIER TABLES.

Plate 4 in the Appendix to the *Drawing Book*.

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Sheraton's style, in typical form, is well illustrated in the library bookcase shown in Fig. 256. The piped draperies on the rounded flanks (are they curtains, or organ pipes?) and the vases above the cornice are the only disturbing features in the whole design. It will be noticed that Sheraton evades the usual pitfall of the furniture designers of this period, and the turned spiral pilasters on the lower carcase are fixed to the ends, and do not open with the doors. Sheraton gives no directions for manufacture, but this bookcase was probably intended for execution in mahogany, with fine curl wood in the panels of the lower doors, and marqueterie in the friezes of both carcases. Relief would probably have been obtained by bandings of tulip or rosewood, and lunettes of satinwood in the corners of the lower doors.

The fashion for filling the spaces between windows with pier tables surmounted by tall mirrors lasted throughout the eighteenth century. In Plate 4 of the Appendix to the *Drawing Book*, Sheraton gives two designs for pier tables, here reproduced in Figs. 257 and 258. The surmounting mirror-frames would probably be of gilt and carved wood, the tables themselves being of satinwood, with inlay of marqueterie and bandings of tulip.

Sheraton is the pioneer of the square-back "Parlour" or "Drawing-room" chair, one illustration, from Plate 6 of the Appendix, and another from an actual model, being shown in Figs. 259 and 260. The fashion for seat coverings of silk, elaborately worked with the needle, as shown in Fig. 259, was probably borrowed from Robert Adam. Sheraton evidently had some opportunity of inspecting many of the Adam creations, during the process of manufacture, in his peregrinations round the leading London workshops, while engaged in peddling his own publications. The central splat of the chair illustrated here, and the design of the front legs, indicate the influence of Robert Adam very strongly. That Sheraton failed to acknowledge his indebtedness was probably an intentional omission.

The wardrobe, Fig. 261, is another typical Sheraton design, although some modification during manufacture must have been necessary—that is, if it were ever made at the time—as if the fluted surbase moulding were carried round the drawers of the wings and the ends, the doors would not open. Sheraton's shop training was probably somewhat rusty at the period when this design was evolved.

Sheraton's keen sense of design and eye for proportion are well demonstrated in the two card-tables, Plate 11 in the Appendix, illustrated in Figs. 262 and 263. His extensive use of the water-leaf is shown on the right-hand example, for which he recommends that the ornamentation of the legs be carved, that on the framing being painted or "japanned." In satinwood of good figure, with the cloth-lipping of tulip, crossbanded and "feathered," both of these tables would make up very well. Sheraton's directions for

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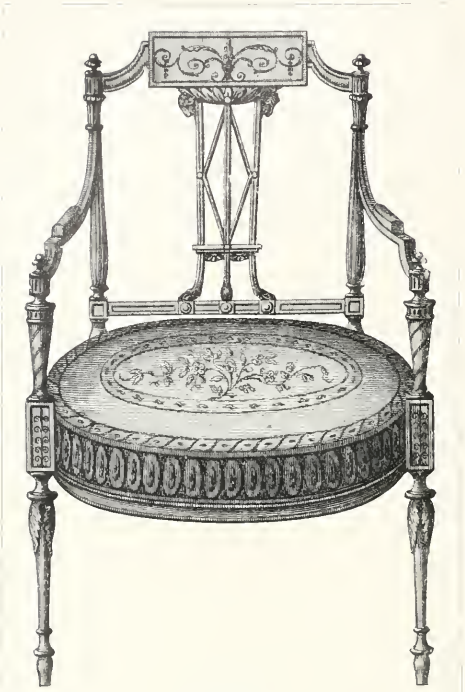

Fig. 259.
"DRAWING-ROOM CHAIR."
A design from Plate 6 of the Appendix to the *Drawing Book*.

manufacture are worth quoting, as an answer to the general notion of the later eighteenth century being an age of fine workmanship. He says: "*As to the method of managing the tops, I take it to be the best to rip up dry deal, or faulty mahogany, into four-inch widths, and joint them up. It matters not whether the pieces are whole lengths, provided the jump joints be crossed. Some tongue the jump-joints for strength.*

"*After the tops are dry, hard mahogany is tongued into the ends of the deal, then slips are glued on the front and the back, that the whole may appear solid mahogany, if a moulding is to be worked on the edge; but if the edge be crossbanded, there is in this case no need for tonguing in mahogany.*"

Comment on the shoddiness of this method of construction is hardly necessary beyond a brief mention of the fact that Sheraton should have known that crossbanded veneer glued edgewise on the end grain of deal would fall off at the first slight shrinkage of the top.

Fig. 260.
SATINWOOD PAINTED CHAIR.
In the possession of Messrs. A. B. Daniell & Sons.

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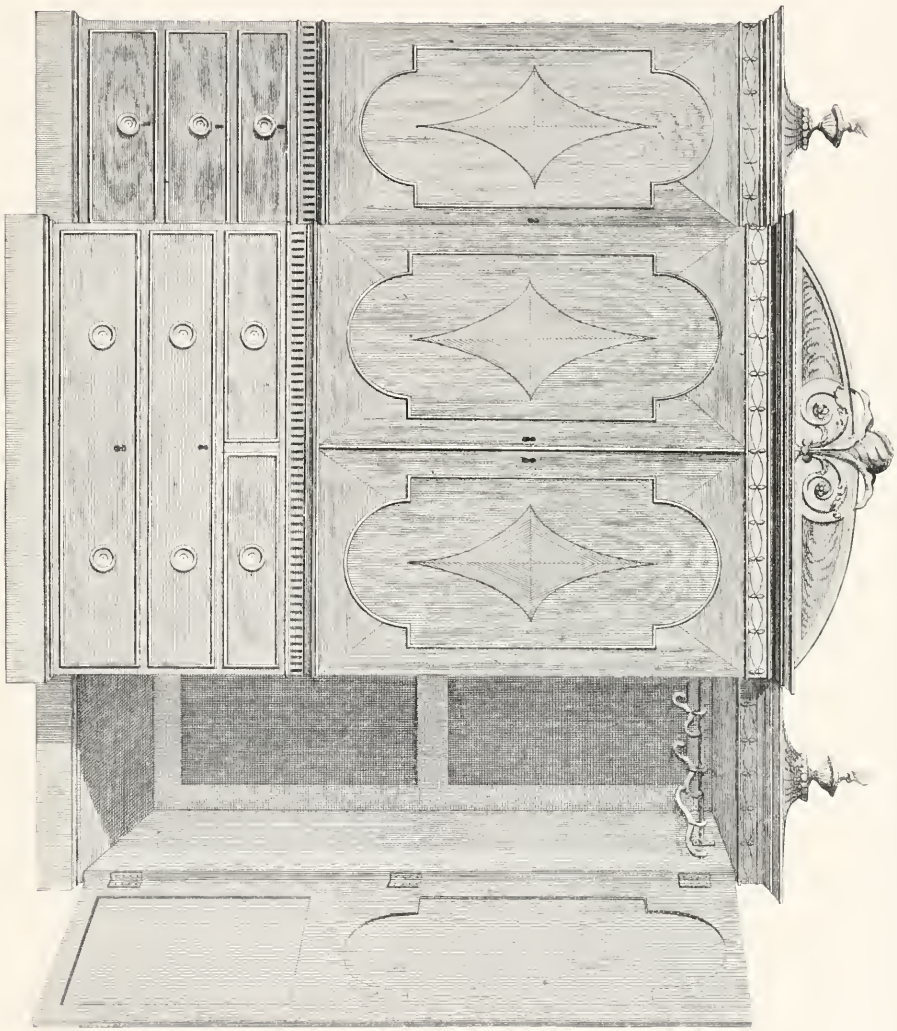

Fig. 261.

"A WARDROBE."

Plate 8 in the Appendix to the *Drawing Book*.

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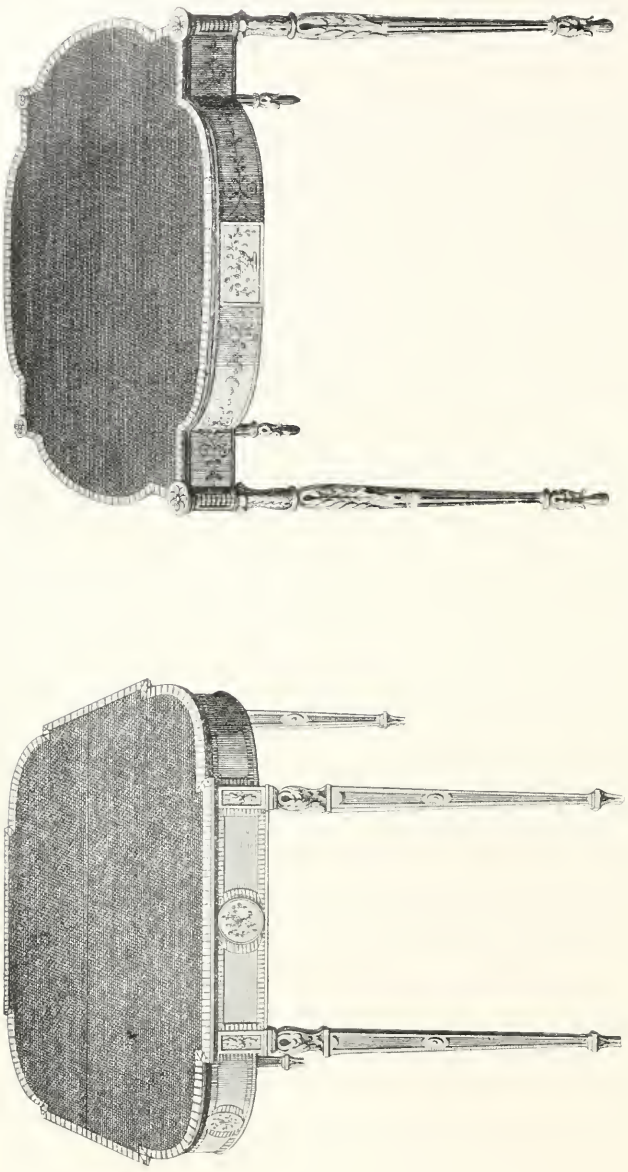

Figs. 262 and 263.
CARD TABLES.
Plate II in the Appendix to the *Drawing Book*.

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The sideboard, Plate 21 in the Appendix, here illustrated in Fig. 264, is probably the most widely known, and also possibly the finest of all Sheraton's designs. It will be noticed that whereas with Adam and Hepplewhite the pedestals are always distinct, they are here connected to the centre, the one top running right through. It is in Sheraton's hands that the sideboard becomes a piece of furniture with some storage capacity, as distinguished from the side tables of Chippendale and his school. Sheraton's own reference to the design is very meagre. He points out that the vases are intended to be screwed to the hollow plinths above the top; an unusual feature, and a necessary one here, as the bases of the vases are so small as to make the whole top-heavy. These vases were probably intended as knife-cases; the right-hand pedestal is racked to act as a plate-warmer, the heater being shown in the engraving. That on the left was probably intended to act as a "pot cupboard," as Hepplewhite frankly admits in the descriptions of the pedestals in the *Guide*. It is exceptional to find an original cellarette fitted to these eighteenth-century pedestal sideboards.

So much has been said and written regarding the super-excellence of the workmanship of the eighteenth-century cabinet-makers, that it is interesting to compare the methods of construction as described in the *Drawing Book* with those current at the present day in the first-class workshops. To take the bookcase doors on Plate 29, shown in Fig. 265, it will be as well to quote Sheraton's own remarks verbatim, the especial reference being to No. 6 of Plate 27, which has been re-drawn and is reproduced in Fig. 266, although the general instructions have an application also to the doors in Fig. 265. "*With respect to No. 6, it may be useful to say something of the method of making it, as well as some of those in Plate XXIX.*" "*The first thing to be done, is to draw on a board, an oval of the full length and breadth of the door. Then take half the oval on the short diameter and glue on blocks of deal at a little distance from each other, to form a caul; then, on the short diameter glue on a couple of blocks, one to stop the ends of the veneer with at the time of the gluing, and the other, being bevelled off, serves to force the joints of the veneer close, and to keep all fast till sufficiently dry. Observe, the half oval is formed by the blocks of the size of the astragal, and not the rabbet; therefore consider how broad a piece of veneer will make the astragals for one door, or for half a door. For a whole door, which takes eight quarter ovals, it will require the veneer to be inch and a quarter broad, allowing for the thickness of a sash saw to cut them off with. Veneers of this breadth may, by proper management, be glued quite close; and if the veneer be straight baited, and all of one kind, no joint will appear in the astragal. Two half ovals thus glued up will make astragals for a pair of doors, which, after they have been taken out of the cauls and cleaned off a little, may be glued one upon the other, and then glued on a board, to hold them fast for working the astragals on the edge; which may easily be done, by forming a neat*

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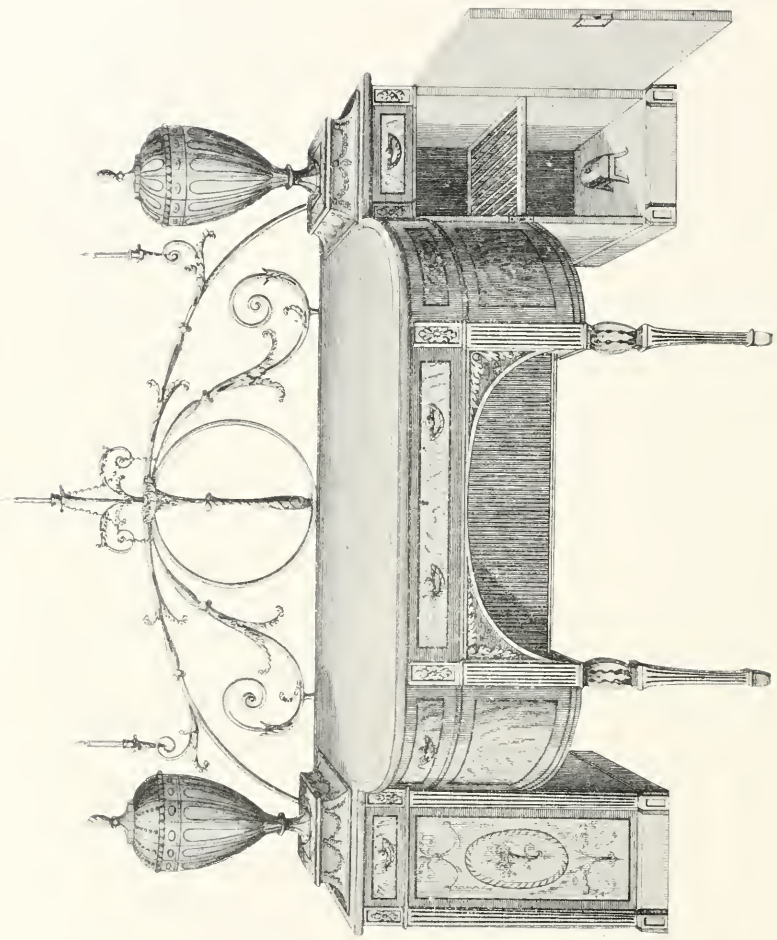

Fig. 264.

"A SIDEBOARD WITH VASE KNIFE-CASES."

Plate 21 in the Appendix to the *Drawing Book*.

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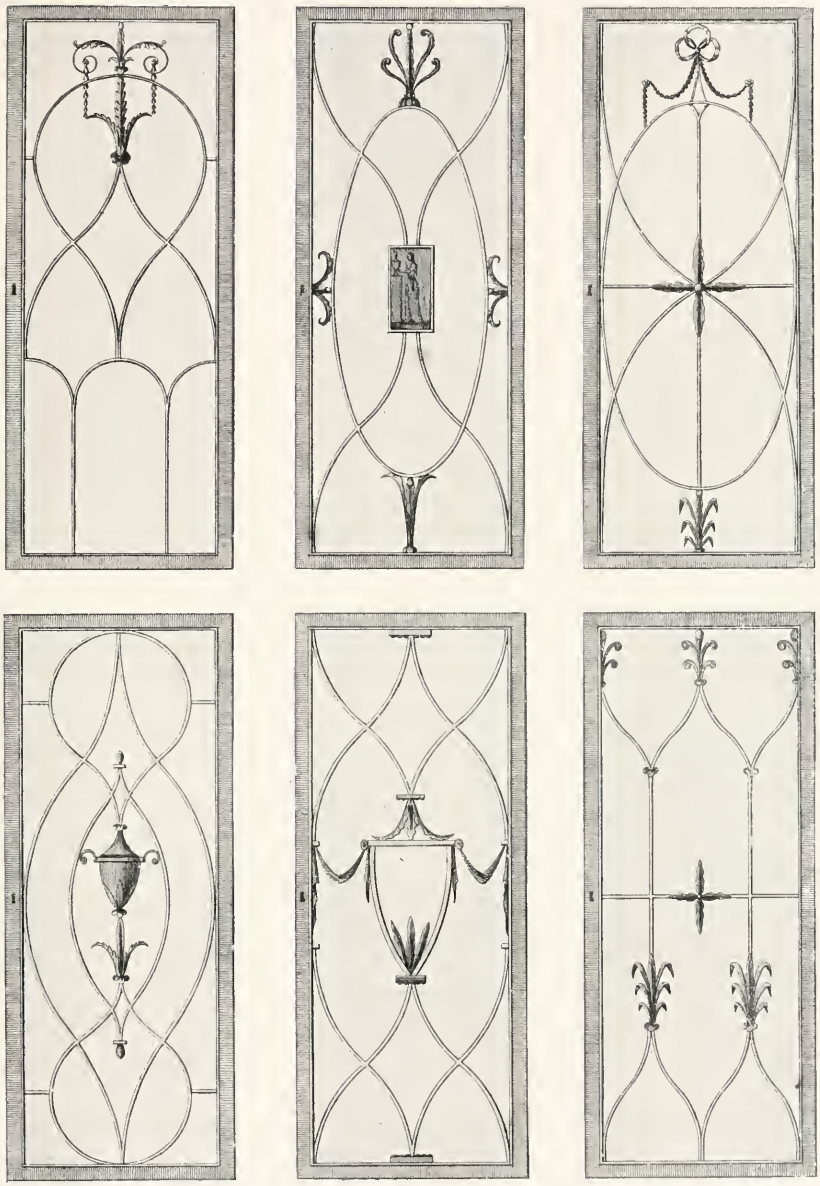

Fig. 265.
DOORS FOR BOOKCASES.
Plate 29 in the *Drawing Book*.

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a stragal in a piece of soft steel, and fixing it in a notched piece of wood, and then work it a a gage; but before you work it, run on a gage for the thickness of the astragal; and after you have worked the astragal, cut it off with a sash saw, by turning the board on which the sweep pieces are glued on an edge; then having sawn one astragal off, plane the edge of your stuff again, and proceed as before.

"For gluing up the rabbet part, it must be observed that a piece of dry veneer, equal to the thickness of the rabbet, must be forced tight into the caul; and then proceed as before is gluing two thicknesses of veneer for the rabbet part, which will leave sufficient hiding for the glass, on supposition that the astragal was glued in five.

"The door being framed quite square, without any moulding on the inner edge, proceed to put in the rabbet pieces. Put, first, an entire half oval, and screw this to the inner edge of the door, and level with it; then jump up the other half oval to it, and screw it as before, which completes the centre oval. Next fix the square part, having been before mitered round a block and keyed together, after which, half-lap the other quarter ovals into the entire oval where they cross each other; and into the square part, liping (? lipping) it into the angle of the door, put in the horizontal bars for the leaves to rest on, glue on the astragals, first on the entire ovals, tying it with packthread to keep it on, then the straight one on the outer edge of the framing, fitting it to the oval, lastly, miter the astragal on the square part, and every other particular will follow of course.

"With respect to the doors on Plate XXIX. (Fig. 265), all of them may be made on nearly the same principles, at least the rabbet parts must; . . . . As to fixing any part of the ornaments introduced in these doors, this is easily done, by preparing a very strong gum, which will hold on glass almost as strong as glue on wood."

It is curious that the two who are generally regarded as essentially the practical cabinet-makers of the later eighteenth century, Hepplewhite and Sheraton, should both boggle at these doors with shaped astragal lattices. "Hepplewhite & Co.," as we have seen, frankly cut the Gordian knot by suggesting that they should be made in metal and painted. They do not pretend to give any succinct directions for the manufacture of the pieces which are illustrated in the *Guide*, and may therefore be excused for ignorance of the construction of these shaped lattices; but what are we to say of Sheraton, the practical cabinet-maker, the professed teacher of his fellow-craftsmen, and one who was never tired of pointing out their ignorance and his own superior knowledge? He evidently borrowed the idea of these latticed doors from other cabinet-makers, but it is more than doubtful whether he ever made a single example with his own hands, or even watched the process of manufacture by others. An astragal moulding in a door of this kind formed of five thicknesses of veneer *glued edgewise* is an absurdity which

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hardly needs pointing out, and the idea of "jumping" (*i.e.* bending) ovals between blocks should never have entered the head of a practical cabinet-maker. Sheraton's explanation is involved—as are all his constructional descriptions in the *Drawing Book*—and was probably never sufficiently comprehended, even by himself, or the notable omission of the method of housing the central ribs of the astragals which form the rebates for the glass, and the way to secure the glasses in, would have occurred to him. He was also not aware of the undesirability of the internal angles in Nos. 2 and 4 of Plate 29, Fig. 265, if the lattice be constructed in the proper manner—which would inevitably cause the glass in the sections on either side of the central rectangle in No. 2 and above and below the central shaping in No. 4 to break with any change of temperature.

It may not be out of place, for the purpose of showing the contrast between the methods of Sheraton and those in use in cabinet shops, not only of the present day, but also during the eighteenth century, in the making of these lattice doors, judging from the specimens of the work of this period which have survived. We will take as an example design No. 2 of Plate 29, re-drawn in Fig. 266 A, as being straightforward, and easy of comprehension, although the same methods will apply to all the patterns illustrated.

The framing of the door is first constructed, tenoned, and mortised together, rebated on the back and moulded on the front inside edges with an ovolo moulding which will intersect with the astragals to be used for the lattice. This is shown in Fig. B, where both the ovolo and the astragal sections are indicated. The usual way is to polish the ovolo before gluing up the framing of the door, in order to avoid the "dirty corners" which are inevitable when internal moulding angles are polished. When the door is framed together a panel of deal is cut to fit in the rebate, and on this the design of the lattice is carefully set out, with double lines of the same distance apart as the thickness of the astragal mouldings. Where these lines cross, a simple bisection will give the profile of the mitre for the intersecting mouldings, as illustrated in Fig. C. The various shapings are next cut out from wood the thickness of the style-depth of the ovolo on the framing, or that of the astragal. These shapings are, of course, cut the same width as the finished astragal, and they are then sent to the moulding machine to have the bead and double fillet worked. In the case of the work of the eighteenth century, the astragal would, of course, be moulded with the "scratcher," a piece of steel cut out to the reverse of the section required, and inserted between two pieces of wood notched out for the purpose. Fig. D is an example of a primitive "moulding scratcher" which is still used in many of the smaller shops, especially in country districts. The moulding for the central rectangular frame in the door which we are describing, would be worked

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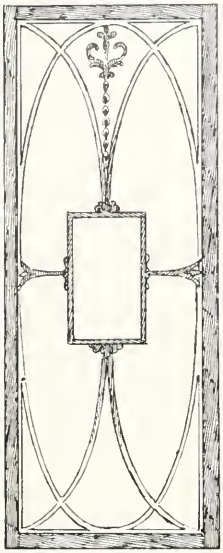

FIG. A

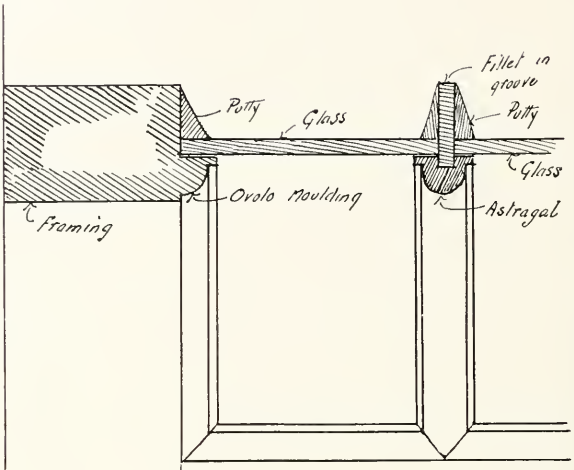

FIG. B.

Sections of framing and lattice

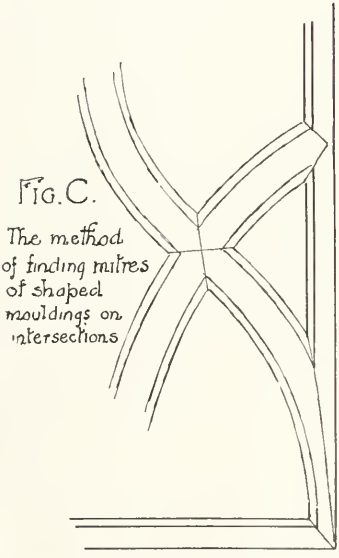

FIG. C.

The method of finding mitres of shaped mouldings on intersections

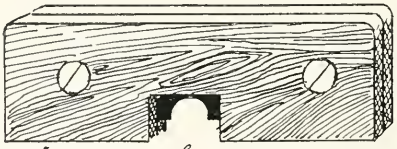

FIG D

'Scratcher' with Cutter for astragal moulding.

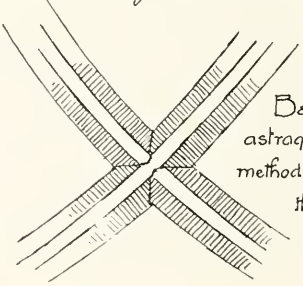

FIG E

Back view of astragals, showing method of crossing the fillets

Fig. 266.

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with a moulding plane in these shops, but in London or large towns the machine would be used for straight and shaped pieces alike. This moulding would be made in one straight piece and framed up later together with the shaped pieces.

After the astragals have been worked, the uniting pieces at the top, bottom, and sides would be cut out ready for the carver, but before, the grooves for the strengthening fillets which form the double rebates would be scratched in these and the astragals. Fig. E shows the astragals grooved with the fillets inserted. The astragals are then polished, and mitred together on the set-out board, and cut in, to intersect with the ovolo on the framing of the doors, and they are then neatly glued together and allowed to set. The backboard is then removed, and although the lattice is too weak to stand any strain, the gluing of the mitres will hold it sufficiently to permit of the fillets being glued in the grooves behind. It is presumed that the carved ties at the top, bottom, and sides of the oval have been made and fitted with the lattice. The grooves behind in these would only run through the centres, from the oval to the framing, the fronds of the honeysuckle at the top, for instance, being allowed to rest on the glass, secured only by cement or fish glue. The door is now turned over on its face, and the fillets, of width just sufficient so as to come flush with the inside face of the door when they are in position, are put in. To get the maximum of strength, these fillets are not mitred, but allowed to run through in one length the one way across, the transverse being butted or lightly cut in, in a V groove, into the other, as shown in Fig. E. These fillets, being usually only one-eighth of an inch in thickness, are bent into shape, instead of being cut, thereby avoiding short-grain wood. The glass is then cut for the panels formed by the rebates on either side of the fillets, and is either puttied or beaded in; the former is more usual, and is stronger, although the glasses are more difficult to replace in the event of breakage. The fitting of the lock, bolts, and the hinges, and the polishing of the flat faces of the framing, complete the door, which is then ready for hanging.

It will be seen from the above that the process of constructing these lattice doors is very different to that described by Sheraton in the *Drawing Book*. What is also more material for our present purpose is, that the method here described is the one which was generally followed in the eighteenth-century work. However the trifling details may have been varied in different shops, the finished result must have been the same, as astragals built up of several veneer thicknesses are never found in cabinet and bookcase doors of the period. One is forced to the conclusion that the technical training in his craft which Sheraton received in his native town did not include any experience of the construction of lattice doors, although it is characteristic of the man that the lack of this knowledge did not prevent him from instructing his fellow-workmen in the same way as if he possessed it.

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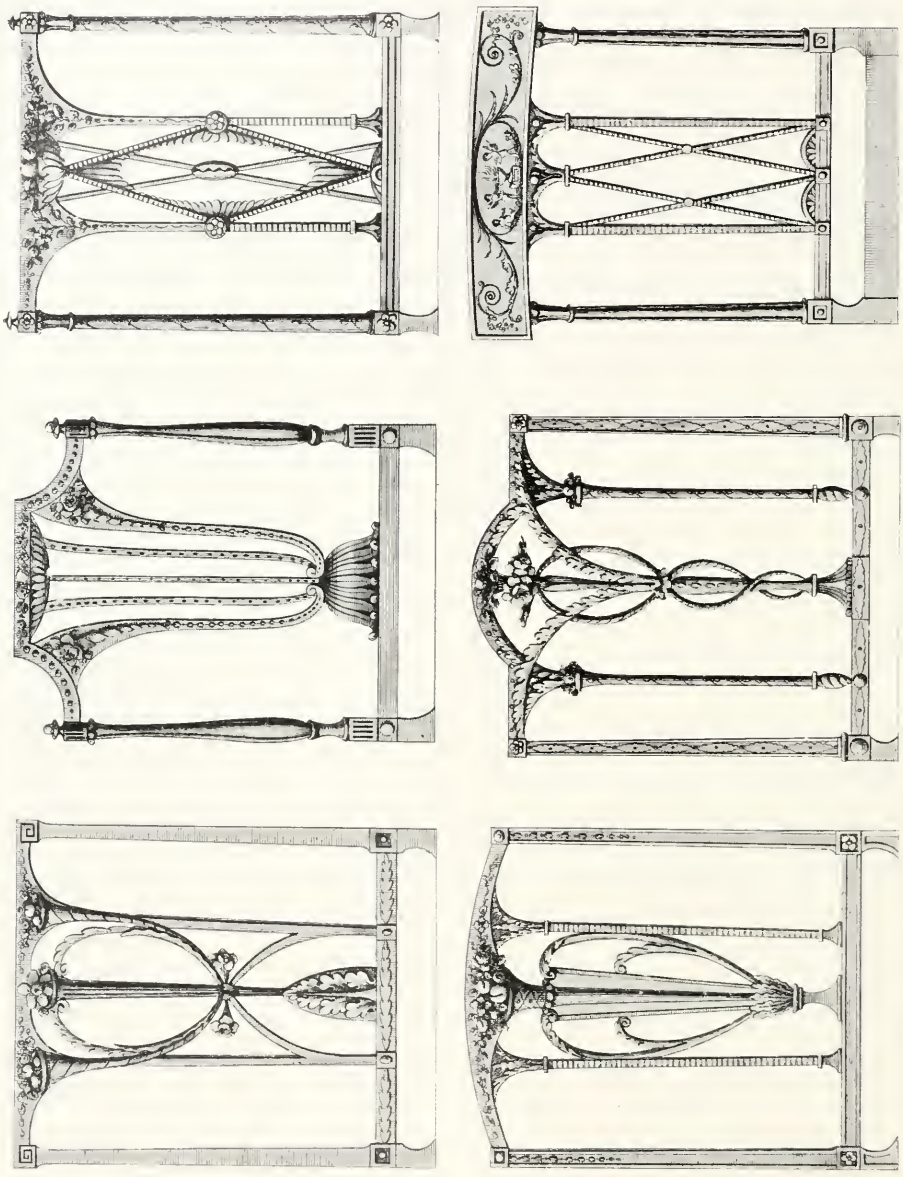

Fig. 267.
"BACKS FOR PAINTED CHAIRS."
Plate 25 in the Appendix to the *Drawing Book*.

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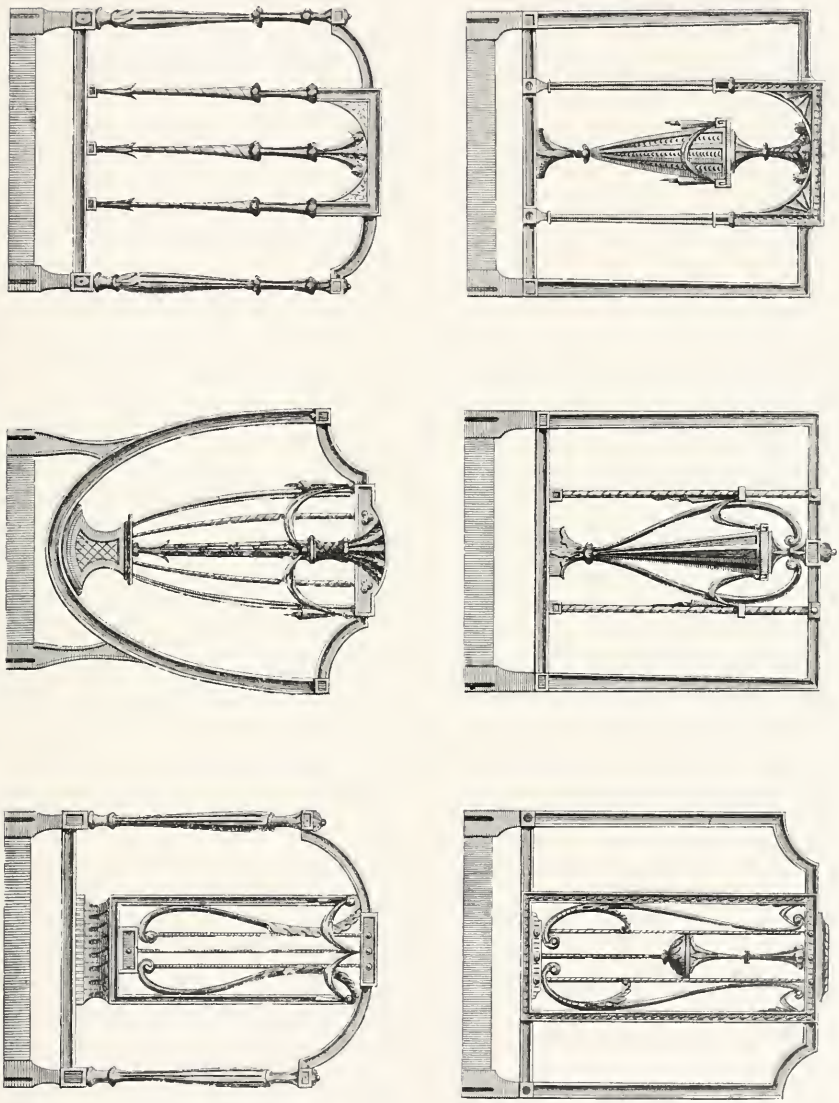

Fig. 268.

"BACKS FOR PARLOUR CHAIRS."

Plate 28 in the Appendix to the *Drawing Book*.

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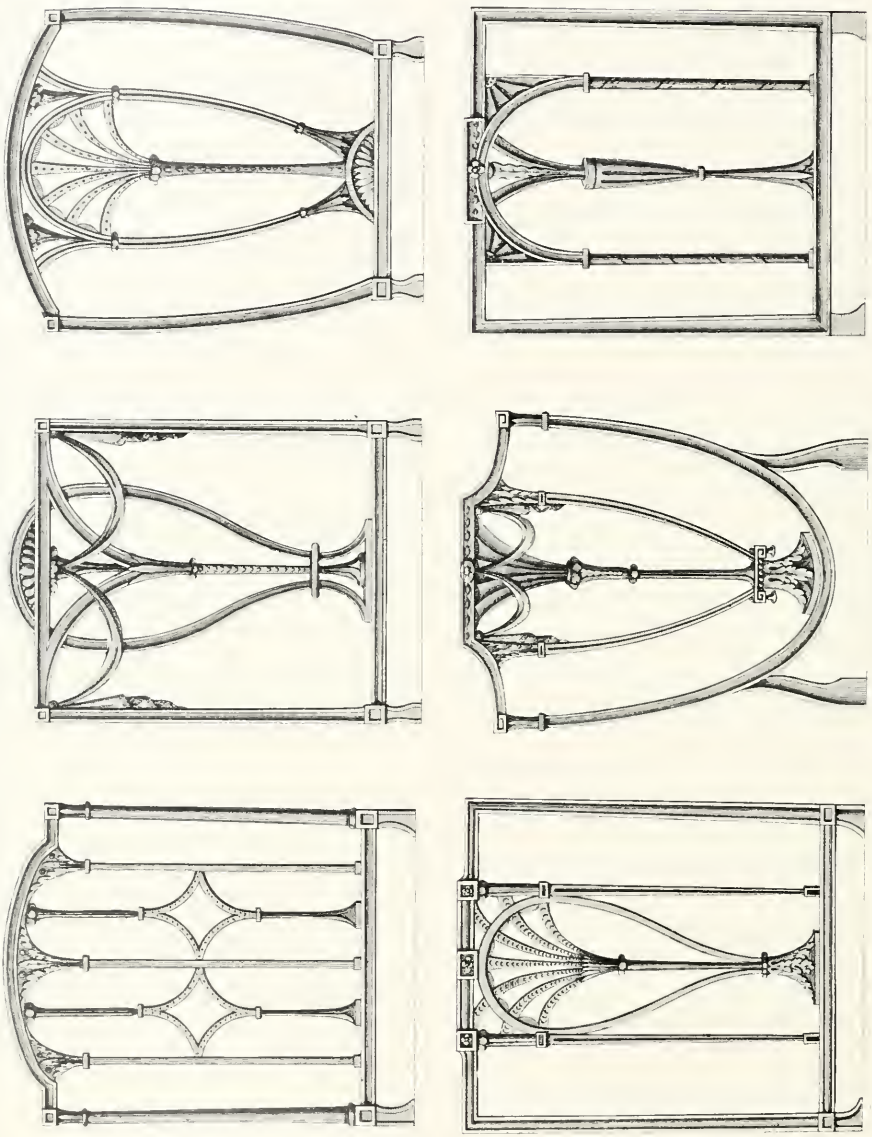

Fig. 269.
CHAIR BACKS.
Plate 36 of the *Drawing Book*.

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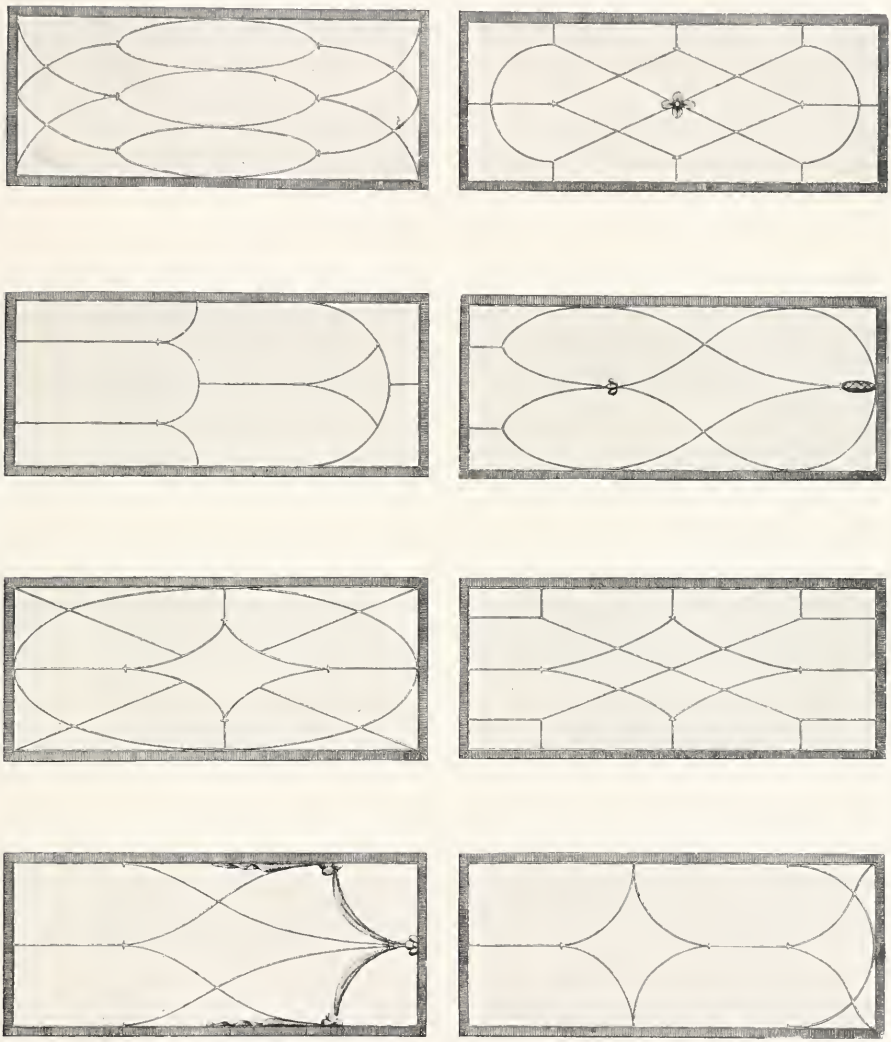

Fig. 270.
DOORS FOR BOOKCASES.
Plate 27 in the Appendix to the *Drawing Book*.

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The three illustrations Figs. 267, 268, and 269 are examples of Sheraton's chair backs, and are among his most happy creations. They serve to show that the shield-back, in its various forms, which is so usually credited to Sheraton, belongs almost entirely to the school of Hepplewhite. The former illustrates only two chair backs of this pattern in the whole of the *Drawing Book*, shown in No. 5 of Figs. 268 and 269. In both instances the top rails are flattened in a way which bears no resemblance to any chair designed by Hepplewhite.

In the last example, Plate 27 in the Appendix, Fig. 270, eight designs for bookcase doors are given, each quite logical in conception, and capable of being executed with considerable effect.

Before finally dismissing Sheraton's *Drawing Book* from our notice, it is curious to remark how the two plates at the end, views of the "Prince of Wales's Chinese Drawing-Room," come as a species of shock. Sheraton's designs improve so much in quality as the book progresses, that this reminder of the ghastly atrocities of the Brighton Pavilion acts almost as a kind of death's-head at the artistic feast. Even Sheraton is constrained to remark that though the whole "*may appear extravagant to a vulgar eye, it is but suitable to the dignity of the proprietor.*" This may have been intentional, but if otherwise, it is a delicious commentary on the taste and the "dignity" of the "first gentleman of Europe."

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Chapter XV.

Furniture of the Sheraton Period.

WE have seen, during the progress of this work, that only some two or three of the craftsmen-designers of the eighteenth century were influential enough to dominate the furniture fashions of their time. Chippendale and Hepplewhite alone had created definite styles by illustrated and manufactured examples—a distinction, in the case of the former, much more marked than the mere use of the terms would appear to imply. With both Chippendale and Hepplewhite, however, it is very difficult to estimate both the measure and the duration of their influence on the trade of the cabinet-maker. Chippendale presumably had acquired considerable renown before the publication of the first *Director* in 1754, and the permanent character of the furniture made in the St. Martin's Lane workshops probably resulted in his influence being more widespread, in an indirect way, than would have been supposed. There is also strong evidence for the supposition that the so-called Chippendale Style was the result of the combined creative efforts of many designers rather than the product of Chippendale's own brain. It is impossible otherwise to account for the strong similarity between many of the *Director* designs and those in the books of Ince and Mayhew, Lock and others, issued at almost the same period.

With Hepplewhite we are also similarly circumstanced. When his designing career began, it is not possible to state with certainty. We know his style was a posthumous one as far as publication is concerned, and overlapped that of Sheraton. To Hepplewhite probably belongs the credit of popularising the lighter furniture woods —satinwood, sycamore, chestnut, and the like—and the custom of overlaying inferior woods, such as birch and beech, with "Japan" decorated with paintings of flowers and similar ornaments. It would appear, on casual examination, that very little, if anything, could have been left for Sheraton to accomplish. To assess the measure of credit due to the latter, however, several considerations have to be carefully borne in mind. As we have already seen, Hepplewhite (the term is used to indicate a factory rather than a man) was primarily a cabinet-maker; Sheraton—as far as his London career was concerned—was wholly a designer. The distinction is of greater significance than one would suppose, at first thought. The cabinet-maker could rely only on beauty of line and accuracy of proportion in the production of saleable wares; he was not obliged to be otherwise original. These considerations, however, were

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those of manufacture, not of designing. With Sheraton, however, who had to depend on originality of outline or purpose for the sale of his designs to the trade, the case was quite otherwise. Even had he possessed the nicest taste in matters of line or proportion—and here he was by no means perfect, in spite of the "loud timbrel" which he sounded so assiduously—had his drawings escaped the many pitfalls of the imperfect reproductive processes of his time, he was still at the mercy of the cabinet-makers whose task it was to translate his creations from paper to wood. It is difficult enough, as every furniture designer knows, to be original in even a slight measure, when one has the privilege of ranging through some twenty or thirty known styles, English and French, from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. How circumscribed Thomas Sheraton must have been can be well imagined. It was not as if everything which he designed constituted an addition to the examples of the "Sheraton Style"; he had laid down certain principles, as binding on the master as on the disciple. Sheraton probably turned to the new "English Empire" in the later stages of his career, not so much because of the change of fashion—as this had not fully set in at the date when the *Cabinet Dictionary* appeared—as by reason of the fact that, so far as his own style was concerned, he was, artistically speaking, "played out." The realisation of his creations depending not on the work of his own hands, but on those of other makers over whom he could have exercised little or no control, must have resulted in many absurdities, either from an unskilled attempt to make according to his designs or to evolve something new on the same lines.

It is not surprising, therefore, considering the fact that Sheraton's limitations were those of a designer, to find many attempts on his part to depart from stereotyped forms. In this striving after greater originality he was not always successful; he evidently lacked the correcting experience of actual manufacture, where proportions are rectified and details frequently radically modified. In his search after originality of purpose, however, Sheraton effected many innovations. He was probably the first to combine the capacities of the Adam and Hepplewhite pedestal sideboard within the compass of the one piece of furniture, the well-known side table with deep wine-drawers or cupboards on either side. It will be also noticed, in the following illustrations, that useless expense or workmanship, lavished where it is not shown to the best advantage, is carefully avoided. Sheraton's creations had to be commercially possible as they left his hand. He designed or made for no wealthy patrons where expense was of no consequence. The only exception to this rule is the instance of the "Carlton House Table," already illustrated, and there is strong evidence to show that this was not an original product of Sheraton's brain, as we shall see when the work of the house of Gillow is considered.

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Of the sideboards of the period, Fig. 271 is a characteristic example. The mahogany is light in colour, polished with wax and friction without staining, and inlaid with lines of holly and fans of satinwood marqueterie. The locks are of the usual double-bolted pattern of this period, with the wards flat on the back plate, and the keyholes protected with flush escutcheons cut from thin ivory. The right-hand drawer, with the front panelled and cock-headed to represent two, is fitted with low partitions to hold bottles. On the left hand are two drawers, made to balance the one on the right, and in the centre is the usual long table-napery drawer. The veneer on the front faces is of fine curl figure, cut very thick, and well laid with the caul. The handles are of the oval patera type, which was usual until about 1795. Sideboards of this kind were usually fitted with a straight brass gallery, as in the next example, Fig. 272. This is a somewhat unusual model, the pedestals being disproportionately narrow. The taper of the legs begins from the rail of the first drawer, and continues down to the usual pointed toe. The three drawers in each pedestal are evidently proportioned to contain spoons, forks, and table cutlery, although none are fitted with locks. The fronts of each drawer are veneered with fine "fiddleback" mahogany, friezed with $\frac{3}{4}$-inch bandings of holly. The brackets are veneered with plain satinwood, inlaid with purple lines. A peculiar feature is the triple reeding of the shafts of the upright brass spindles of the gallery.

Fig. 273 is of the usual type, veneered with plain mahogany banded with tulip, and with the panels of the legs inlaid with cross-banded satinwood. The right-hand pedestal is fitted with a door panelled to simulate two drawers, and with escutcheons to correspond. On the left are two drawers to match.

A very charming little sideboard of about the 1790 period is illustrated in Fig. 274.

Fig. 271.
MAHOGANY INLAID SIDEBOARD.
8 ft. 1 in. long × 1 ft. 8½ ins. deep × 3 ft. 1½ ins. high.
Date about 1790.

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It is rare to find these smaller pieces so well proportioned and of such fine quality. The top is faced up to nearly $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches in thickness, veneered with mahogany and cross-banded with tulip wood. The edges are friezed with the same wood, a task of some difficulty considering the end grain at the sides, to which veneer will not readily adhere. The squares of the legs, the bracket piece in the centre, and the drawer fronts are inlaid with holly lines and sand-shaded fans of the same wood. On either side is a deep drawer, the one on the right fitted with low partitions to hold bottles. This example has the advantage, from the collector's point of view, of being in practically its original condition, untouched by the desecrating hand of the "French" polisher.

Towards the close of the century proportions began to broaden and become more bulky. In the next example (Fig. 275) the taper of the legs is so slight that its presence can only be detected by measurement. Both right and left-hand pedestals are fitted with doors, and the frieze has one drawer only, the ring-handles on either side serving

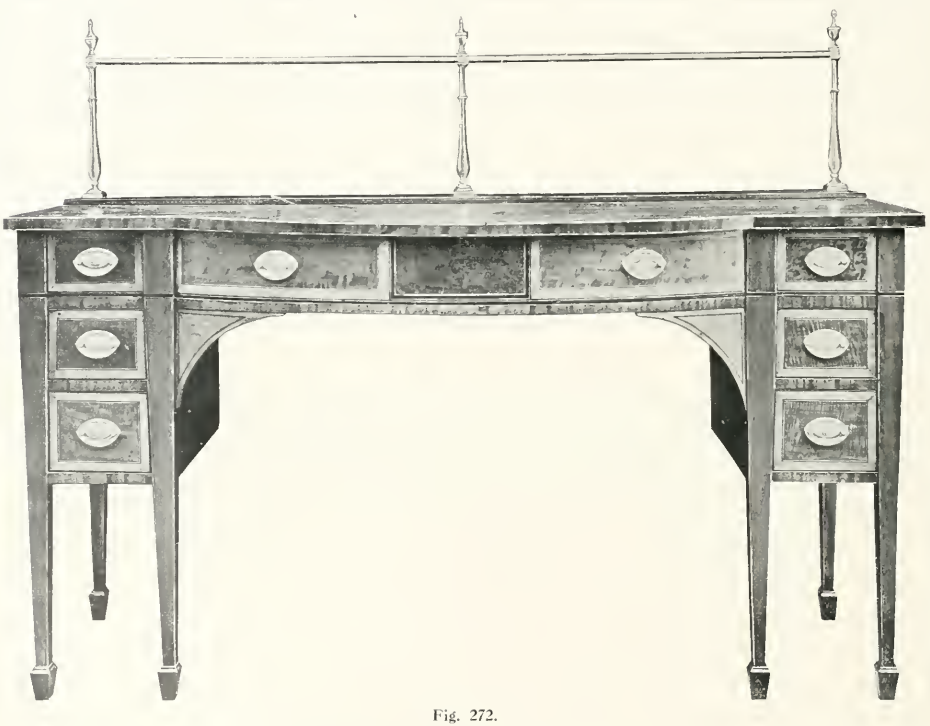

Fig. 272.

MAHOGANY INLAID SIDEBOARD.

5 ft. $6\frac{1}{2}$ ins. long × 2 ft. 11 ins. high · 1 ft. 5 ins. deep.

Date about 1790-5.

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no purpose other than for ornament. The handles on the doors are larger than those on the frieze, an unusual but very justifiable detail. Figs. 276 and 277 date from the very close of the eighteenth century, the fashion for the lion-headed handles commencing about 1795 and continuing throughout the "English Empire" period. These two sideboards correspond in date to the heavy dining-room chairs, with broad lateral splats and the front legs tapered and hollowed on the front faces, which are so general in the shops of provincial antique dealers. Fig. 276 is quite a good specimen of reputable cabinet-making, the wood being of choice quality, feathered and friezed to produce the utmost richness of effect. The deep cellarette drawers are inlaid with rosewood lines and "garter stars" of holly and ebony. It is rare to find sidedoards of this kind with the original tambour slides under the central drawer in their original condition. Fig. 277 is nearly semicircular on plan,

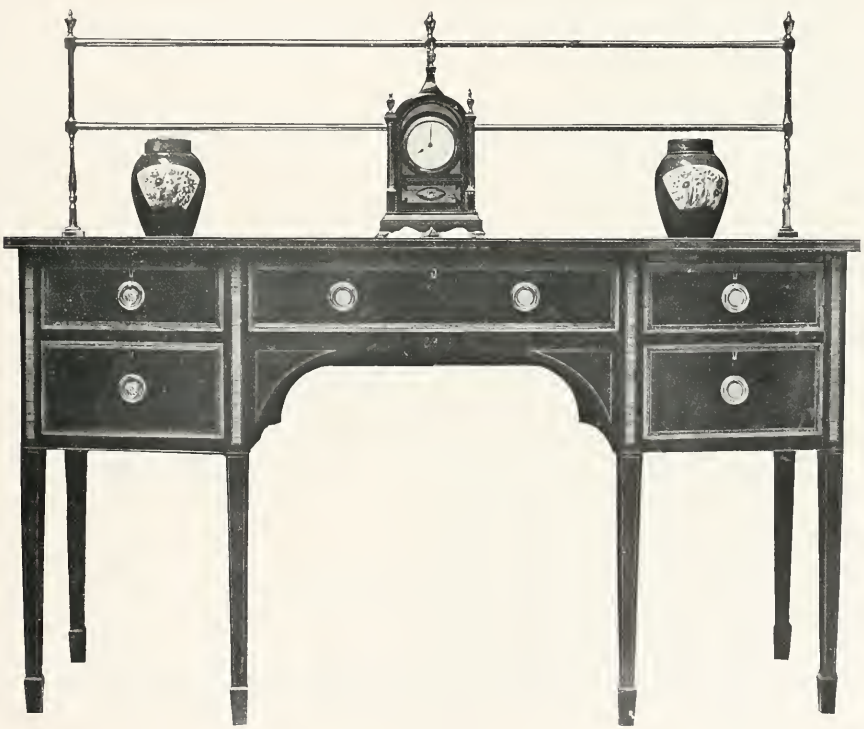

Fig. 273.

INLAID MAHOGANY SIDEBOARD.

6 ft. 1 in. long × 3 ft. 1½ ins. high × 1 ft. 8½ ins. extreme depth.

Date about 1790.

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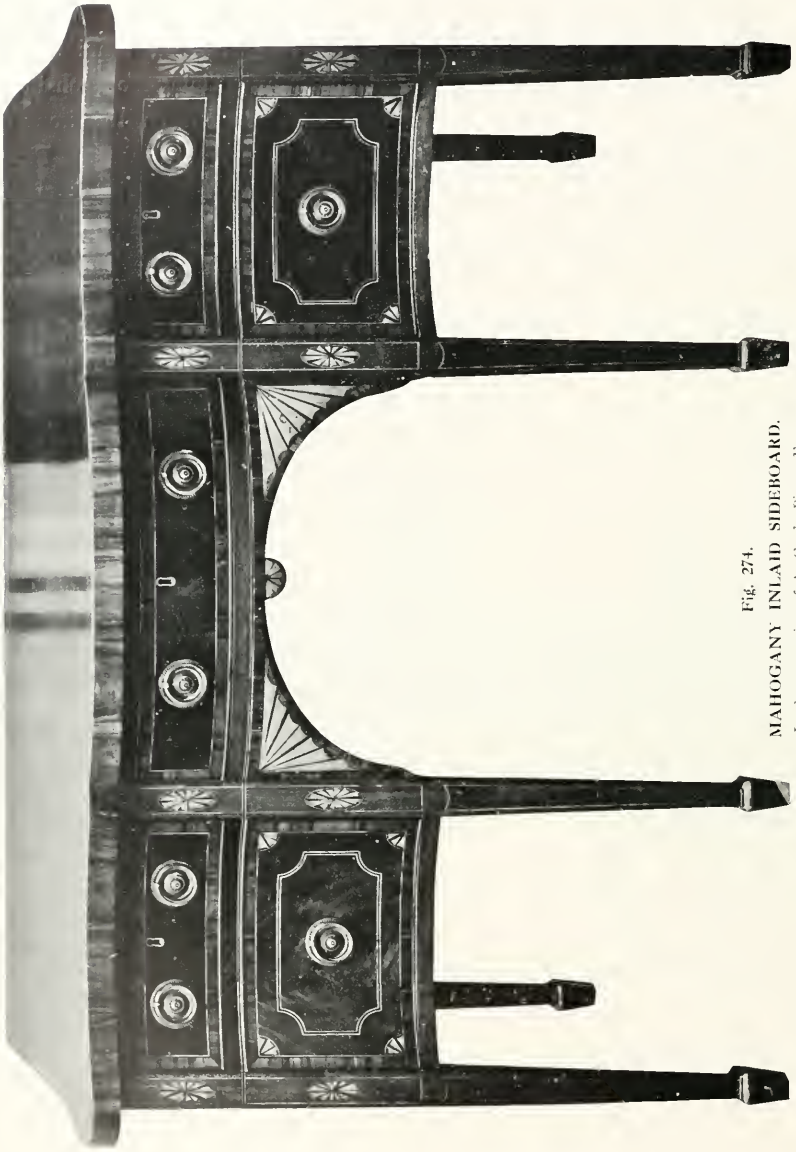

Fig. 274.

MAHOGANY INLAID SIDEBOARD.

In the possession of A. C. de Finna, Esq.

4 ft. 9 ins. long × 2 ft. 3 ins. deep over top × 2 ft. 10½ ins. high.

Date about 1790.

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and is fitted with seven drawers in all, each with the lion-headed ring-handles. With these later sideboards a somewhat reprehensible custom came into vogue—that of making the tops of thin wood three-quarters of an inch, or even less, in thickness, and facing them up. Pine being the usual wood employed, and the veneer being applied on the one side only, these tops are generally found either warped, or, where they have been secured with glue, cracked across.

The usual accompaniment to these self-contained pedestal sideboards was a pair of slope-fronted knife-cases, six examples of which are given in Figs 278 to 283. Apart from the reference by Sheraton to a certain John Lane, who specialised in the making of these articles, there is strong evidence to suggest that the general sphere of manufacture of these knife-cases was exceedingly localised. The inside of the lids is nearly always inlaid with either a circular fan or star, in boxwood and ebony, within a panel formed by a chequered line of the same woods. This detail is almost general, although of apparently unusual character. The mountings of these cases were quite frequently of a very expensive character, generally of silver, pierced and engraved. It is also quite usual to find the holes which were cut for the knives, forks, and spoons, edged with fine chequered lines. There is abundant evidence to show that these knife-cases were costly articles of furniture, and from the generic resemblance between many

Fig. 275.

MAHOGANY SIDEBOARD.

4 ft. 3 ins. long × 2 ft. 11 ins. high × 1 ft. 7½ ins. deep.

Date about 1795.

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examples we may assume that the sphere of manufacture was confined to a few cabinet-makers who, in the words of Thomas Sheraton, "made it their main business."

The vases, Fig. 284, are later in character than the pedestal form of sideboard, the fashion for which had declined shortly after 1790, and were evidently made to stand on sideboards of the Sheraton type. Poised on the small moulded bracket feet, their position on the narrow top of a pedestal would have been too insecure. The pair illustrated here are triumphs of beautiful cabinet work. The quadruple terracing is pierced with holes, as in the knife-boxes, each being edged with a fine line of holly. The tops rise on a central shaft fitted with a "spring-piece" of satinwood, shown in the left-hand illustration. The vases are decagonal in lateral section, each side being veneered with choice curl mahogany of the same figure, and edged with a triple line of holly and ebony, these lines being carried over the lid, which is circular on plan, dividing it in the same way as the shaft.

The sphere of manufacture of these knife-urns was probably as localised as that of the slope-top boxes already referred to. They are usually spherical in lateral section, to facilitate turning on the lathe; the flat facetted sides, as in the pair illustrated here, being very unusual. In nearly every instance, if not in all, the fashion of dividing the vase longitudinally by an inlay of lines is followed. Fig. 285 is an example

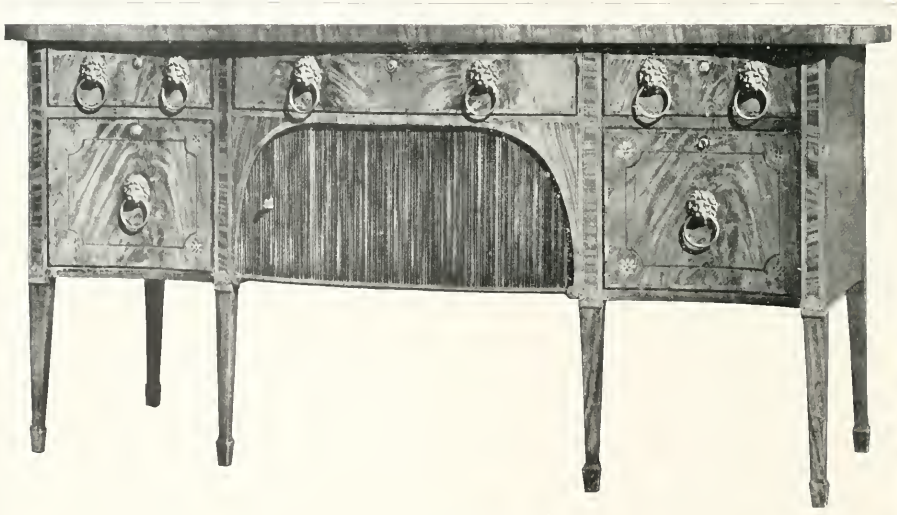

Fig. 276.

MAHOGANY SIDEBOARD.

In the possession of W. Clare Lees, Esq.

6 ft. 3 ins. long × 3 ft. 1½ ins. high × 2 ft. 4 ins. extreme depth.

Date about 1795–1800.

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of the more usual type. The general proportions of the specimen are not so fine as those of Fig. 284, the short necking below and the greater diameter of the vase giving a squat appearance, noticeable when the two are compared. The next example, Fig. 286, affords additional evidence of the theory, before stated, that these vases were not intended for pedestals, but for self-contained sideboards of the later type. This urn is veneered with satinwood, inlaid with fine chequered lines. Satinwood was frequently used for the Sheraton sideboards, rarely, if ever, for those of the pedestal kind. It is self-evident that a satinwood urn would not be made to surmount a mahogany pedestal.

These knife-urns must not be confused, by association, with those made to surmount the pedestals of sideboards of the Hepplewhite type. The latter were intrinsically parts of the piece of furniture to which they belonged, and were made at the same time. The

Fig. 277.

MAHOGANY SIDEBOARD.

5 ft. 10 ins. long × 2 ft. 7 ins. deep × 3 ft. 0 ins. high.

Date about 1795 1800.

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Fig. 278.
SATINWOOD KNIFE-CASE.
13½ ins. high · 9 ins. wide
· 11½ ins. deep.

Fig. 279.
MAHOGANY KNIFE-CASE.
13 ins. high · 9 ins. wide
· 11 ins. deep.

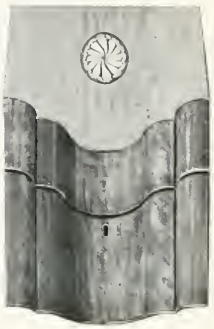

Fig. 280.
SATINWOOD KNIFE-CASE.
11½ ins. high · 9¼ ins. wide
× 11 ins. deep.

Fig. 281.
SATINWOOD KNIFE-CASE.
14½ ins. high · 9½ ins. wide
× 12 ins. deep.

Fig. 282.
THE KNIFE-CASE,
Fig. 281, shown open.

Fig. 283.
THE KNIFE-CASE,
Fig. 279, shown open.

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former are quite independent pieces, and were probably made in shops specially devoted to their production. They were also fashionable articles of furniture with the school of Hepplewhite—which synchronises with the early period of Sheraton—but the general form of these is usually more elaborate, and not nearly so graceful as that of the typical Sheraton urns. As an example, one of a pair of knife-vases, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, is illustrated here in Fig. 287, to show the comparative differences of treatment of the same article by the followers of the two men.

Fig. 284.

MAHOGANY KNIFE-VASES.

In the possession of Percival D. Griffiths, Esq.

2 ft. 2 ins. high; base, 8 ins. square.

Date about 1790-5.

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The furniture produced during the last decade of the eighteenth century is characterised by marked variation in the quality of the workmanship. Comparatively few of the older school of cabinet-makers had survived, but here and there one meets with examples which appear to suggest that the old fire and spirit which had maintained the former high standard of the "Golden Age" of English cabinet-making was not yet extinct. Such a specimen is illustrated in Fig. 288, a library bookcase which would have been a magnificent example of high-class workmanship even in the finest period of Chippendale or Hepplewhite. So remarkable is the quality throughout of this piece, that it demands careful description at some length. The carcase work, including the shelves and backs, is entirely of hard Cuba mahogany, veneered on the outer faces with lemon-coloured East India satinwood, inlaid and decorated in various ways. The extreme width, over the lower carcase, is 6 feet 9¼ inches; the height of the lower part

Fig. 286.
SATINWOOD VASE.
1 ft. 9½ ins. high; base 8½ ins. square.
Date about 1790–5.

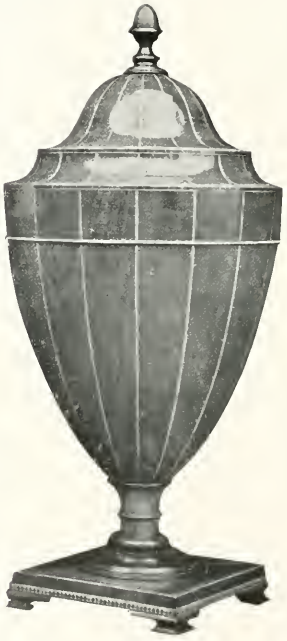

Fig. 285.
MAHOGANY VASE.
(One of a pair.)
In the possession of Messrs. Gill & Reigate
2 ft. 1½ ins. high; base 7½ ins. square.
Date about 1795.

Fig. 287.
CHESTNUT AND SYCAMORE KNIFE-VASE. (One of a pair.)
In the Victoria and Albert Museum.
1 ft. 6¾ ins. high; diameter 9 ins.
Date about 1785-90.

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from the floor is 2 feet 10 inches, and of the upper 5 feet, exclusive of cornice, frieze, and pediments. The height of the latter to the top of the central vase is 1 foot $10\frac{3}{4}$ inches. The pediments are of mahogany, veneered with satinwood, the central one inlaid with green and yellow marqueterie, finely engraved. The mouldings are of light cross-cut rosewood, with the dentil-course of carved satinwood. The central pediment is boldly scrolled, finishing in carved pateræ of satinwood, very sharply cut and burnished with the agate tool. This detail, as we have already seen, was an innovation of the carvers employed by the brothers Adam, designed to produce a modelled effect similar to the ornamentation of Wedgwood's ware. The central vase is of satinwood, with engraved marqueterie cut into the solid wood, and with a square base of Coromandel ebony. The frieze is inlaid with marqueterie of boxwood and pear-tree, also engraved. The dividing astragal is of straight-grained rosewood, the cornice mouldings being identical with those of the pediments. The upper doors are veneered with finely figured "fiddleback" satinwood, with ovolo mouldings, the beads of which are of cross-cut rosewood in satinwood rebates. The flat-section latticework originally had astragal mouldings of the same fashion as the ovolo of the framings, but this cross-cut rosewood bead is now missing, probably broken away in places and then removed altogether. The lattice finishes in the middle of the doors in carved honeysuckle terminals of boxwood, secured to the glass with an adhesive, and at the top, in the centre of each door, is joined to the framing by carved acanthus fronds of the same wood. The glass, which is nearly all original, is secured in the rebates with glazier's putty. The door-framings are $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide, exclusive of the ovolo mouldings, by 1 inch, net, in thickness. The ends of the upper wings are veneered with plain satinwood, banded with borders of cross-cut rosewood $\frac{3}{4}$ inch wide, mitred at the corners and feathered from the centres. The depth of the upper carcases, over the doors, are: centre $14\frac{3}{8}$ inches, wings $13\frac{1}{4}$ inches. The ends are faced inside with slotted fillets to permit of the shelves being put nearer together or farther apart, four shelves being provided in the wings and three in the centre. These are of Spanish mahogany, veneered on the front faces with satinwood, with edge lines of rosewood. The backs are panelled, with framings $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches by $\frac{3}{4}$ inch, moulded with an ovolo on the edges. The panels are $\frac{5}{8}$-inch thick, chamfered on the back, and framed up in grooves. There are two panels in each wing and four in the centre. The lower carcase is boldly shaped, with the peculiar flattened sweeps of hollow and bow found in the best work of the eighteenth century, and probably designed to facilitate veneering with the hammer instead of the caul. The top or table is inlaid with marqueterie of musical trophies, finely engraved, and is banded with cross-cut feathered rosewood. It is $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches in thickness, moulded with a thumb moulding of satinwood, faced up with a hollow of

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Fig. 288.

SATINWOOD INLAID LIBRARY BOOKCASE.

9 ft. 8¾ ins. high × 6 ft. 9½ ins. wide. Extreme dimensions.

Date about 1790-1800.

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cross-cut rosewood, with a satinwood cock bead under. The frieze under this top is inlaid with alternate flutes of rose and violet woods in a ground of satinwood, below which is a rosewood astragal. The bevelled pilasters are inlaid with finely engraved marqueterie of fuchsia flowers depending from honeysuckle ornament. The doors are banded with cross-cut and feathered rosewood, and veneered with ovals formed by radiating satinwood fans in tulip and rosewood. The mitred surrounds are inlaid with marqueterie of box and rosewood scrolls carried over the mitred joints.

Behind the central drawers are four drawers, 3 feet wide by 1 foot $7\frac{3}{4}$ inches deep from back to front, of mahogany, veneered on the fronts with satinwood edged with cock beads of ebony. The handles to these drawers are of the earlier flamboyant pattern, of brass finely chased and plated with silver. In the frieze above the top drawer is a slide fitted with ivory knobs, as shown in the illustration, veneered on the upper face with satinwood banded with rosewood and inlaid with lines of green holly and

Fig. 289.

INLAID SATINWOOD BUREAU BOOKCASE.

7 ft. 10 ins. high × 3 ft. 6 ins. wide (lower carcase); 3 ft. 4 ins. (upper carcase).

1 ft. $7\frac{1}{2}$ ins. deep (lower carcase); $11\frac{1}{2}$ ins. deep (upper carcase).

Date about 1795.

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box. The top drawer is enclosed by a slide running in grooves in the sides, lipped with boxwood and lined with green cloth. This slide when pushed back discloses a nest of eleven drawers very beautifully made, with $\frac{1}{4}$-inch fronts and $\frac{1}{8}$-inch sides, with miniature dovetails. The drawer fronts are of satinwood edged with purple wood, the sides and bottoms of mahogany. The cabinet work in this interior is extremely fine and exact. The four drawers in the centre of the lower carcase are graduated, the fronts being in height, from the plinth upwards, $6\frac{7}{8}$ inches, $5\frac{5}{8}$ inches, $4\frac{7}{8}$ inches, and $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches. The extreme depth of the lower carcase, from back to front, is 1 foot $10\frac{5}{8}$ inches. A noticeable point in the whole piece is that all the wood thicknesses are net—that is, 1-inch "stuff" is exactly an inch thick. The significance of this point has already been pointed out in the second volume of this book.

Fig. 290.
THE BUREAU BOOKCASE,
Fig. 289, shown open.

The design of the entire piece is equally as fine and as studied as its workmanship. The general character is that of the Hepplewhite school, but there are certain indications which suggest a date between 1790 and 1800. The cresting of the wings with the hollowed gables is very unusual, and at first sight appears to be redundant, but a lengthy association with this bookcase will show that this detail has been carefully considered. This cresting of the entire cornice of bookcases and china cabinets appears to have been a familiar one at this period, as the next example, Figs. 289 and 290, has the same feature in a modified form. This bureau bookcase is a curious compound of fine workmanship and faulty designing. There are none of the lofty and dignified proportions of the library bookcase, but the veneers are well chosen—a combination of East and West India satinwoods—and the purple-wood bandings of the drawers blend well with the pale lemon yellow of the satinwood. The

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handles are beautifully chased and silvered. The interior of the bureau is shown in Fig. 290, and behind the doors in the wings of the upper part are six small drawers on each side. The entire piece has an aspect of clumsiness, owing to the meagre amount of glass in the upper part and the disproportionate height of the lower carcase. The lattice-work of the central door is weak in design, an astragal intersecting with a bolected ovolo.

Fig. 291 is one of the cylindrical-fronted bureau cabinets which were popular at this period, the interior of the bureau being shown in the next illustration. The painting of flowers is unworthy of the piece itself, and has every appearance of being a subsequent addition. Although this cabinet is later in character than the school of Hepplewhite—especially noticeable in the general appearance of the upper part—the typical Hepplewhite French foot will be noticed. The fact, of course, is that a

Fig. 291.

PAINTED SATINWOOD CYLINDER-FRONTED BUREAU CABINET.

In the possession of Messrs. Colling & Young.

6 ft. 2½ ins. high × 3 ft. 0 ins. wide × 1 ft. 9 ins. deep.

Date about 1790.

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Fig. 292.
THE INTERIOR OF THE BUREAU CABINET, Fig. 291.

feature of this kind, once introduced, was freely copied for many years after. It has already been pointed out on several occasions that the date of a design feature really gives the maximum, but by no means the minimum, age of a piece. A cabinet may have the character of the Sheraton period, from 1790 to 1800, and we can safely assert that such an example could not have been made *before* such a date. There is no evidence, however, in the design, nor even in the workmanship, to indicate this as the actual date of manufacture, and even the state of the piece itself is no really reliable criterion. It is in the combination of all these, together with an exact acquaintance of the species of woods imported at the different periods, and the knowledge of the dates when fashions waxed and waned, which enables an expert to form a reliable opinion. The knowledge of woods is one of the most reliable weapons in the armoury of the expert—or the forger. The districts, and even the countries, from which eighteenth century mahogany was imported are now cleared of timber. There are many noticeable differences between the mahogany of Cuba, Tabasco, Honduras, the Bahamas, and other parts of Central America which enable exact opinions to be given, supported on unmistakable evidence.

Fig. 293 is a somewhat unusual example of the later Sheraton period. The upper doors are veneered with curl mahogany, banded with satinwood, and with a brass astragal on the meeting styles. Below is a pull-down flap in the centre, fitted behind as a secretaire with the usual small drawers and pigeon-holes, and on either side is a cupboard fitted with partitions. The fronts of the doors and the flap are veneered with mahogany ovals with satinwood surrounds, this treatment being reversed in the two doors below. Under the secretaire are three drawers, and two pull-out slides to support the flap when down. The plinth has been cut down and the character of the French foot, originally similar to the previous example, destroyed in consequence.

Fig. 294 is a typical Sheraton example, exhibiting, in the ornate pediment and cornice, the influence of the *Drawing Book*, in some editions of which this design figures in the accompaniment. The cabinet is veneered with East India satinwood, which has been stripped at a later date and stained to the colour of pear-tree. The next example,

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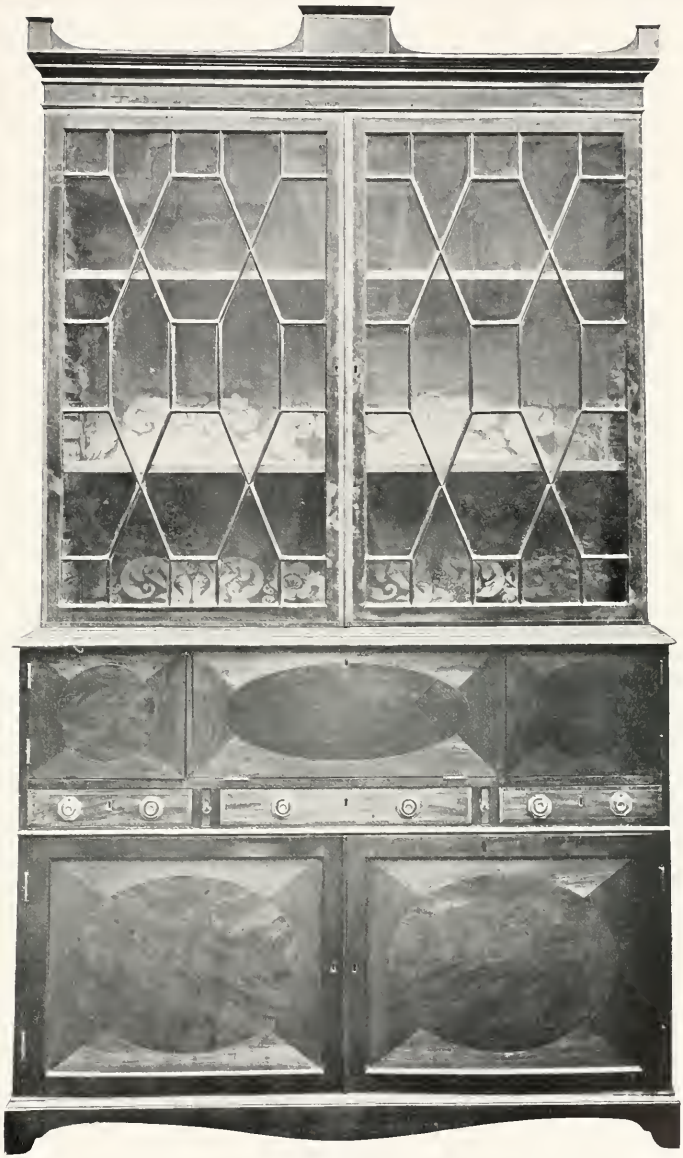

Fig. 293.

SATINWOOD AND MAHOGANY BUREAU BOOKCASE.

8 ft. 9 ins. high × 5 ft. 2 ins. wide × 1 ft. 2 ins. deep (upper part).

Date about 1795.

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Fig. 295, is a cabinet which was destroyed in the recent fire at the Brussels Exhibition in 1910. In this piece extensive use is made of highly figured woods, the doors being veneered with satinwood and the frieze with "lace-wood"—a variety of the plane-tree. The small cornice is formed by a thin flat top of mahogany moulded with a hollow and fillet. The upper carcase is entirely from mahogany, the inside being painted, probably at a later date. In the lower part, the central tablet is veneered with a satinwood fan in a chestnut surround. The side panels are of satinwood banded with stained sycamore. The legs are veneered with mahogany, panelled with thuja above and chestnut below. The top is veneered with chestnut inlaid with sycamore. The sides of the cabinet are panelled with chestnut in light mahogany. The central doors are rebated on the meeting styles, the one on the right almost completely overlapping that on the left—a feature designed to give an appearance of greater lightness to the small doors. The frieze above is inlaid with swags of drapery and flutes, in green holly and chestnut in a sycamore ground. There is evidence of considerable thought and taste having been exhibited in the making of this cabinet, not only in the designing, but also in the judicious choice of the woods which have been employed.

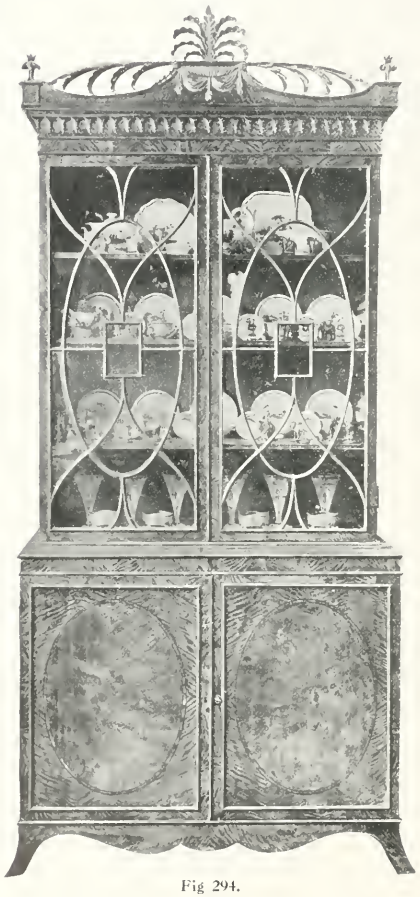

Fig 294.
SATINWOOD CHINA CABINET.
7 ft. 8 ins. high · 3 ft. 6 ins. wide.
Date about 1790–5.

Compared with the period of Hepplewhite, that of Sheraton is characterised by marked variations in the quality of the furniture produced, from the high standard of the satinwood library bookcase illustrated in Fig. 288 to the two examples shown in Figs. 296 and 297. The former is quite beyond the usual grade of the school of Sheraton, the two latter equally as much beneath it. It is

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Fig. 295.

MAHOGANY CABINET.

(Inlaid and Veneered with various Woods.)

In the possession of Alan Mackinnon, Esq.

3 ft. $5\frac{3}{4}$ ins. wide × 5 ft. $0\frac{1}{2}$ in. high.

Upper part 2 ft. 8 ins. high.

Depth.—Lower part, 1 ft. 8 ins.; upper part, centre, $11\frac{1}{2}$ ins.; wings, $7\frac{3}{4}$ ins.

Width.—Wings, $10\frac{3}{4}$ ins.; centre, 1 ft. $8\frac{1}{4}$ ins.

Date about 1790.

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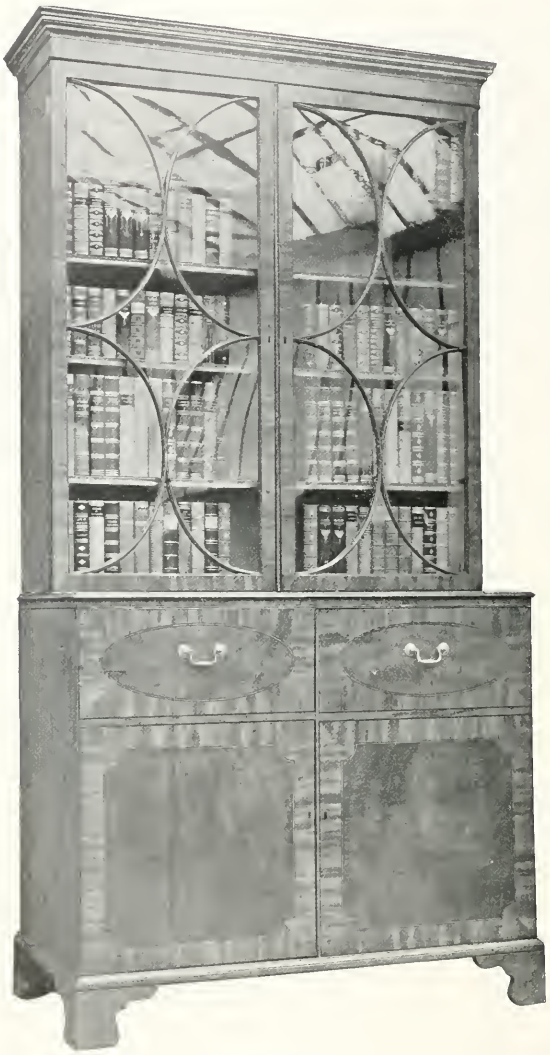

Fig. 296.

MAHOGANY BOOKCASE.

Upper Part.	Lower Part.
3 ft. 7½ ins. wide.	3 ft. 8½ ins. wide.
4 ft. 2 ins. high.	3 ft. 6 ins. high.
10½ ins. deep.	1 ft. 4 ins. deep.

Date about 1795.

not only the poor cabinet work, but also the shoddiness of design and purpose, the sacrifice of everything to cheapness, which is so glaringly apparent, and which, unfortunately, is characteristic of so much of this pre-Empire furniture of the Sheraton period. Fashions were at their ebb, the glories of Chippendale furniture having departed. The day was not ten years distant when the last member of the famous firm was to disappear in the darkness of the Bankruptcy Court. Hepplewhite had popularised the lighter style which is associated with his name nearly ten years before, the use of woods giving a far greater play of colour and variety than was possible with the work of Chippendale, such as satinwood, sycamore, chestnut, maple, plane-tree, amboyna, and thuja, in conjunction with japanning, lacquerwork, and decoration of medallions and garlands. The aristocratic taste was jaded; the craving was for a new fashion. Sheraton's style

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was too little removed from that of Hepplewhite to satisfy the demand, the result being that in the greater number of instances his designs were made up by cabinet-makers of the lower grade. Adam and Hepplewhite had practically exhausted the nobility; there remained for Sheraton only the middle classes. The former fine traditions had not become so debased that the work could be scamped to bring the cost down to the limits demanded by the new patrons; it became the province of the designer to give the appearance rather than the reality of the former elaborate furniture of the previous decade. Thus we find such details as the lower part of Fig. 296, provided with two doors, panelled with sham drawer fronts, and the upper doors of the next example, where the flat latticework is fixed to the face of the glass with an adhesive, instead of being built up and "ribbed" behind, as in the older work. At the same time it is instructive to notice how the taste in such details as proportions, sections of mouldings, and the like—in short, just in those particulars where

Fig. 297.

MAHOGANY BOOKCASE.

Lower Carcase.	Upper Carcase.
3 ft. 8 ins. wide.	3 ft. 6½ ins. wide.
3 ft. 7 ins. high.	3 ft. 9¾ ins. high.
1 ft. 9 ins. deep.	1 ft. 0 ins. deep.

Date about 1790–5.

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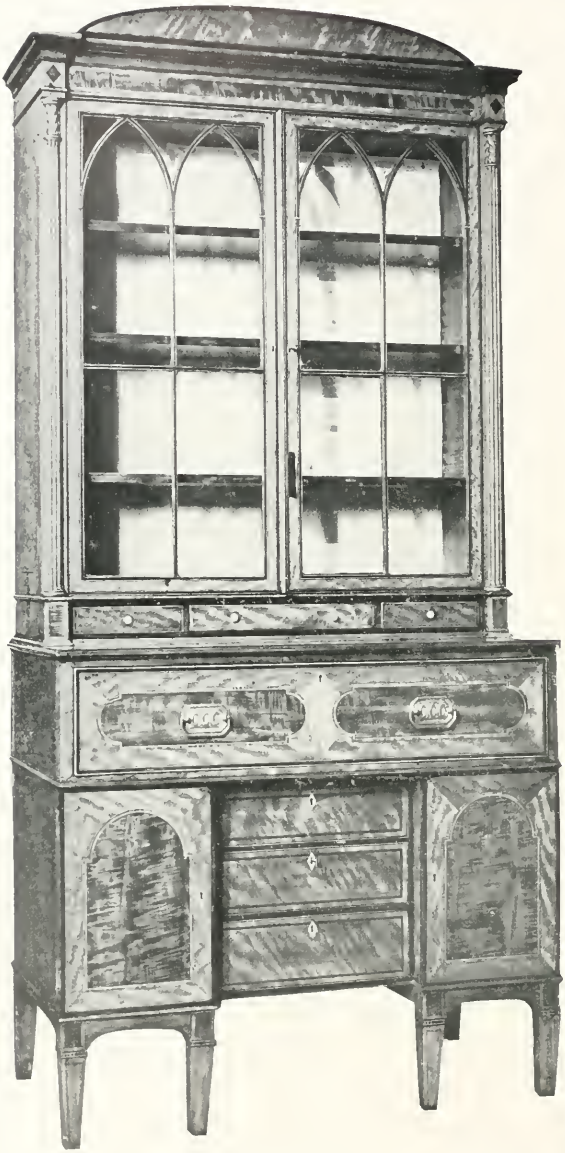

Fig. 298.

MAHOGANY AND SATINWOOD SECRETAIRE BOOKCASE.

7 ft. 3 ins. high · 3 ft. 7½ ins. wide.

Upper part, 12⅜ ins. deep; lower part, 1 ft. 9½ ins. deep.

Date about 1795–1800.

the cost was not increased—had become almost automatic. As a design nothing could be finer, within its limits, than Fig. 296; and in Fig. 297 the veneers have been well chosen and used with considerable discrimination. In this example the appearance would have been still further enhanced had the French bracket plinth been left in its original state instead of being cut down to fit the low rooms of a later generation. In the lower carcase, behind the doors, are three long drawers, the appearance of which suggest that the bookcase was intended to also fulfil the functions of a wardrobe.

The famine years from 1795 to 1800, and again during the height of the Napoleonic wars, had resulted in a necessary increase in the wages of the town-dwelling artisan, and the cost of furniture was enhanced in a corresponding ratio. With the mere village joiner, however, this rise in wages was hardly appreciable; he existed on the same plane as the agri-

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cultural labourer, upon whom practically the whole brunt of the hard times had fallen. This difference in the rate of wages, and consequently in the cost of production, resulted in a marked slackness in the trade of the metropolitan cabinet-maker and a corresponding increase in that of the village joiner. Sheraton's *Drawing Book* had permeated the trade of his time (a far less formidable proposition than would have been the case some fifty years later), and the principles of his style were generally comprehended in a rough-and-ready fashion. Country pieces, however, were seldom justly proportioned; the knowledge which comes from long practice in shops where fine furniture was continually made, and in large quantities, was lacking. The single-handed village joiner had neither the experience nor the facilities of his London brethren, nor that of his fellow-tradesmen working in large towns. Fig. 298 is a good example of the country piece of the last five years of the eighteenth century. The revival of the details of forgotten fashions, the absence of all proportion—as in the placing of such a heavy piece of furniture on six diminutive tapered legs—the "cribbing" from here, there, and everywhere, and the combination of such details to the utter destruction of all harmony, will be noticed by those who have thus far followed the development of English furniture during the later eighteenth century. As some compensation for the poorness of the design, however, the veneers are well selected, and the general workmanship is of quite a respectable standard.

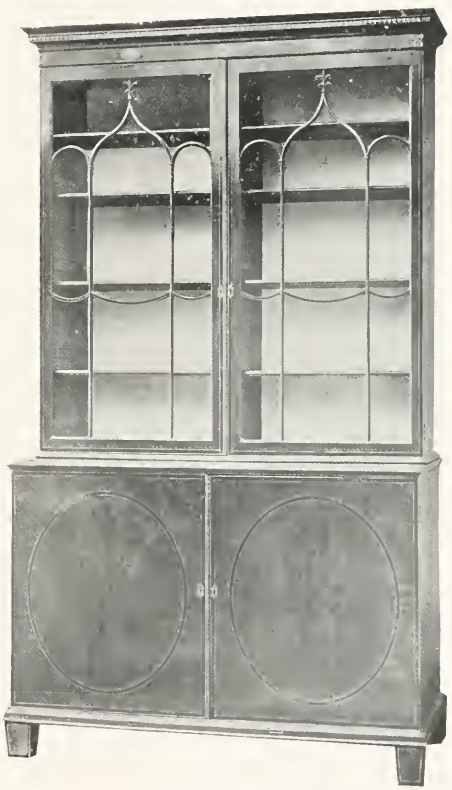

Fig. 299.
MAHOGANY BOOKCASE.
7 ft. 3 ins. high 3 ft. 9½ ins. wide.
Upper carcase: 11½ ins. deep.
Lower carcase: 1 ft. 7 ins. deep.
Date about 1795–1800.

Fig. 299 marks a return to London fashions and proportions. The door tracery is characteristic of the

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Fig. 300.
SATINWOOD CABINET.
4 ft. 10 ins. high × 2 ft. 1 in. wide × 12½ ins. deep.
Date about 1795.

Hepplewhite period, but the details of workmanship, the pattern of the cornice and of the inlaying of the lower doors indicate a later date. The stump feet are later additions, probably replacing a cut out plinth of the familiar "bracket" type. Fig. 300 is a typical Sheraton example, a cabinet of open shelving above a cupboard with solid panelled doors. The shaping of the sides and the arrangement of the shelves show that these cabinets were intended for the display of china rather than to hold books. In this piece both East and West India satinwoods are used in combination, the latter in the panels of the doors. Although both kinds are known by the general title of satinwood, they are in reality quite distinct species, the first being of the family of *Cedrelaceæ*, the second the timber of *Ferolia Guianensis*. The former is a native of Ceylon and the Coromandel coast, the latter of Guiana. East India satinwood does not appear to have been imported, or was certainly not used much before about 1795. It is rare even in Sheraton work, and is never found in authentic Hepplewhite examples.

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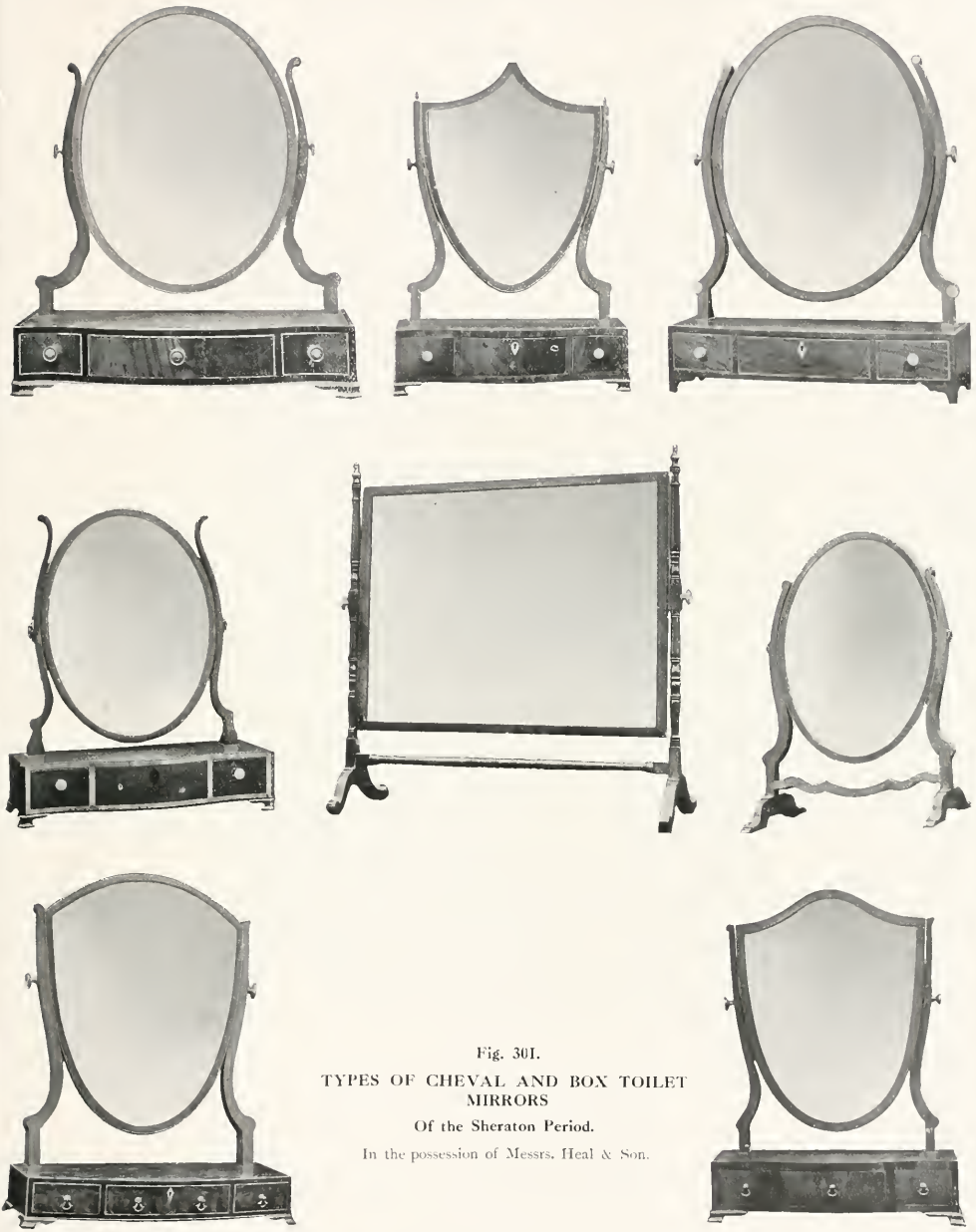

Fig. 301.

TYPES OF CHEVAL AND BOX TOILET MIRRORS

Of the Sheraton Period.

In the possession of Messrs. Heal & Son.

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Fig. 302.

MAHOGANY INLAID WARDROBE.

7 ft. 3 ins. high · 3 ft. 9 ins. wide × 1 ft. 9½ ins. deep.

Date about 1790.

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Before considering the subject of the bedroom furniture of the Sheraton period, it would be as well to understand precisely what constituted the appointments of the bedchamber of this period. Bedsteads were still of the "four-post" kind, although the open or French type came into favour during the early years of the nineteenth century, when the "English Empire" of Thomas Hope came into vogue.

A wardrobe, generally of two doors, with trays behind and drawers below, the doors frequently hinged with "stopped butts" to open to a right angle only, fitted with runners on the inside to permit of the trays being withdrawn to the front of the doors without the weight breaking the slips away; a "tallboy" chest as a pendant piece, made to correspond, although not to match, and sometimes a chest of drawers of the usual type, with the top drawer fitted with a writing slide, ink bottles, patch and powder boxes, &c.—these constituted the receptacles for holding garments. Dressing-tables were of two kinds, which were made indiscriminately for the use of both sexes. The first was the contained dressing-chest, on four tapered legs, with double boxed top, hinged to throw open on either side, beneath which was a framed mirror hinged on the front and strutted behind, and the usual patch and powder boxes. The second variety was the chest of drawers with a small cheval or box mirror made to stand on the top. Types of these mirrors are shown in Fig. 301. The washstand was nearly always a very insignificant piece of furniture, sometimes made to stand in a corner, and cut for a basin of the dimensions of a modern salad bowl. Considering that bathrooms were practically unknown and that washstands capable of holding basins of the size usual at the present day do not appear to have been made, one is lost in wonder as to how our eighteenth-century ancestors managed to keep themselves even decently clean. Perhaps the custom of rouging and powdering, practised by the exquisites of both sexes, acted as a substitute.

The hanging wardrobe, made to accommodate the hooped and flowing dresses of the ladies of this period, was an introduction of the Sheraton school, Hepplewhite confining himself to the type before referred to. During the earlier Chippendale period, the wardrobe in any form was a rare piece of furniture. One or two designs are given in the *Director*, but they do not appear to have been made to any extent, the "tallboy" chest fulfilling this function.

Fig. 302 is the more usual type of wardrobe of this period, a cupboard with two doors superimposed on a chest of drawers. The doors are framed, finishing with square edges on the inside, projecting one-eighth of an inch above the face of the panels, and friezed with cross-banded rosewood with holly lines on either side. The doors are framed up square, faced with thin mahogany, and veneered with mitred and cross-cut curl wood. The panels are each veneered with a complete curl, and are beaded in behind.

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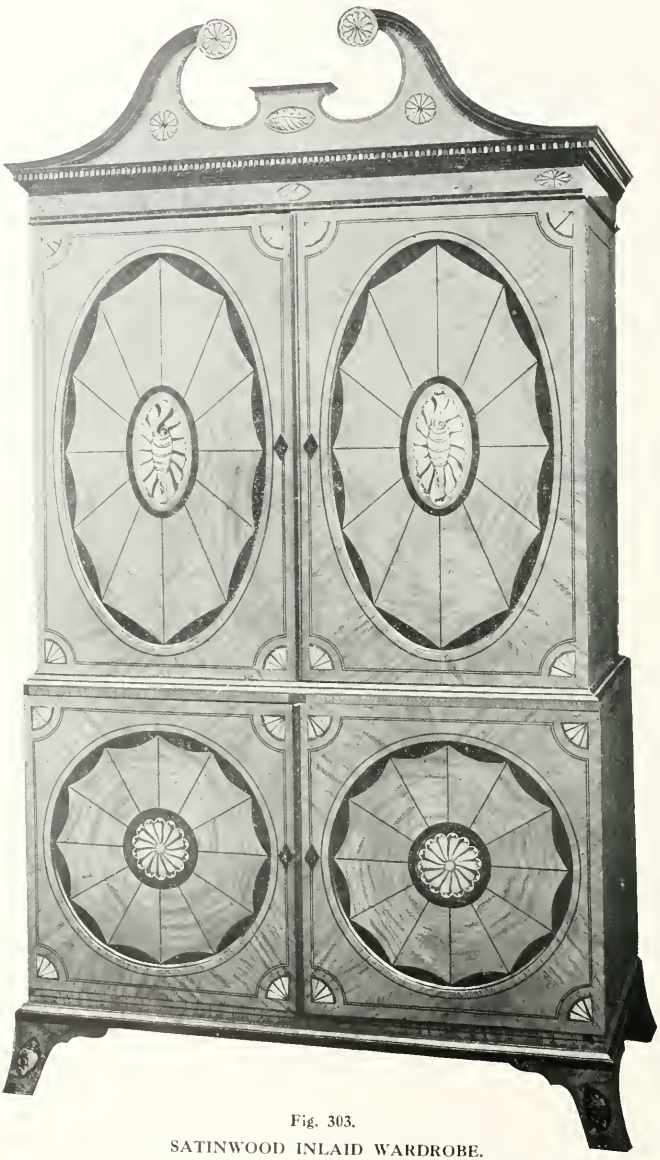

Fig. 303.

SATINWOOD INLAID WARDROBE.

7 ft. 15 ins. high × 3 ft. 10½ ins. wide × 1 ft. 10⅝ ins. deep.

Date about 1790.

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Fig. 304.

MAHOGANY WARDROBE.

In the possession of A. C. de Pinna, Esq.

4 ft. $0\frac{3}{4}$ in. wide (upper part); 4 ft. 2 ins. wide (lower); 8 ft. $3\frac{1}{2}$ ins. total height.
Lower part, 3 ft. $4\frac{1}{2}$ ins. high. Upper part, 3 ft. $10\frac{1}{2}$ ins. high (without pediment).
,, ,, 1 ft. $8\frac{1}{4}$ ins. deep. ,, ,, 1 ft. $7\frac{1}{2}$ ins. deep.

Date about 1790.

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The upper part is fitted with three sliding trays. Below are four drawers with brass ring-handles and flush escutcheons of ivory. The chest finishes in the usual type of French plinth.

In Fig. 303 the lower part has three drawers, enclosed by two doors, made to accord with those above, veneered with mitred satinwood inlaid with purple lines and fans of sand-shaded holly. The panels are inlaid with radiating fan-pieces of satinwood and purple-wood, the central ovals in the upper doors having a conventional shell of shaded chestnut, and patera circles in those below of the same wood. The slender "swan-necked" pediment of satinwood with mouldings of purple, finishing in pateræ of holly, is typical of both the later Hepplewhite and the Sheraton periods. Although

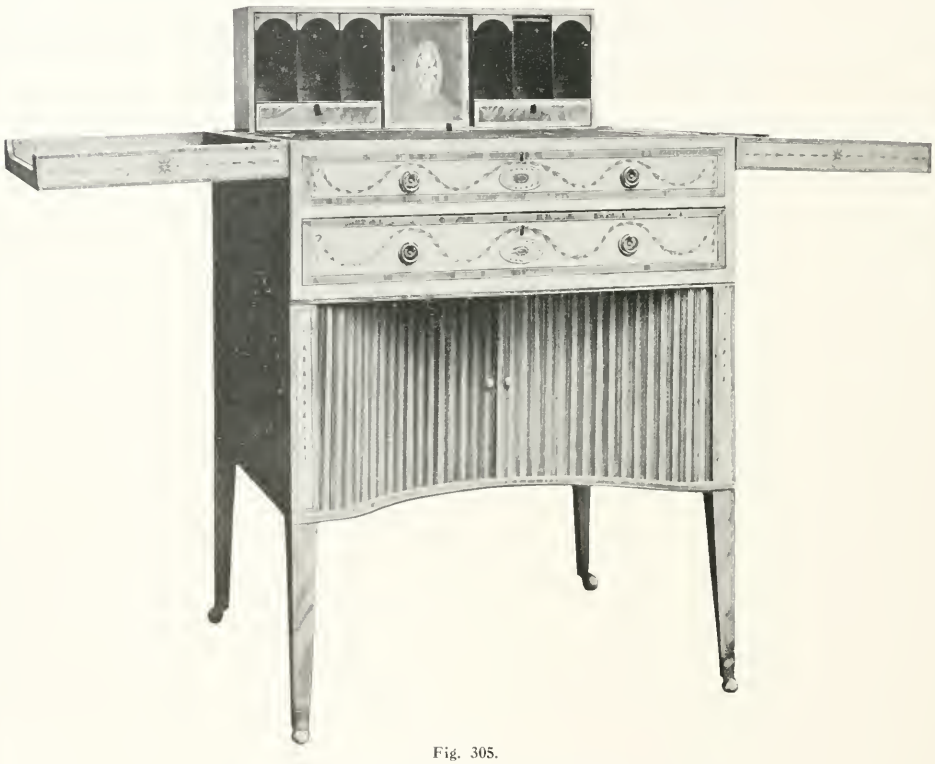

Fig. 305.

SATINWOOD INLAID WRITING AND DRESSING TABLE.

In the possession of Messrs. A. B. Daniell & Son.

3 ft. high × 2 ft. 4 ins. wide (when closed) × 1 ft. 10 ins. deep.

Date about 1790–5.

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decorated on an elaborate plan, the workmanship and the material used in this wardrobe are both poor in quality. The backs are of common deal, and much of the satinwood is veneered on pine.

Fig. 304 is a good example of the higher class of furniture which was made shortly after 1790. This wardrobe has the same graceful "swan-necked" pediment as in Fig. 303, but the general proportions and the judicious assorting of the woods used for veneering and inlay have been much more carefully studied.

Fig. 305 is one of the combined dressing and writing tables which were made in numbers at this date. Sheraton describes this type as a "harlequin" table in the *Drawing Book*, a name obviously suggested by the rising back, which is counterweighted —or rather overweighted—and when released by touching a spring suddenly rises into the position shown in the illustration. Sheraton illustrates a very complicated mechanism to attain this result, neglecting the very obvious method of counterweighting adopted in this and in nearly every other specimen of these harlequin tables found at the present day. So much for the difference between theory and practice. This table is veneered with West India satinwood, inlaid with festoons of green marqueterie, the tops when closed showing ovals of engraved holly surrounded by similar ornament as on the drawer fronts. The rising writing slope is lined with old velvet and strutted underneath to permit of it being supported at various angles. Receptacles are provided on either side—on the left for ink and wafers, on the right for pens. Immediately under is a sham drawer, below which is one fitted with a square-framed toilet mirror and divisions for patches, powders, and cosmetics. The small and very pretty ring-handles are of brass, and were formerly silvered, although all the plate has now worn away. The legs are tapered on the inside only, and finish in small castors. The tambour front is made to slide to right and left, and is hollowed on the front so as to be out of the way of the person sitting at the table. These enclosed dressing-tables were made indifferently for male and female use, the only difference being, as a rule, that those made for the former sex were fitted with extra drawers fitted for spirit decanters. In a later chapter on the work of the house of Gillow an example will be given, from the original cost-books of that firm, fitted in this way, provision being made in the estimate of cost for decanters and glasses. One would have thought, considering the late, or rather early, hours to which the drinking-bouts of our eighteenth century ancestors were protracted, and that it was regarded as an ungentlemanly act or a sign of effeminate upbringing not to finish the carouse under the table, or to be able to walk unassisted to the bedroom, that such fittings to the dressing-table would have been regarded as a superfluity. Perhaps they were invaluable on the morning after, on the common curative principle of "taking a whisker from the dog that bit you."

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Fig. 306.

SATINWOOD PAINTED DRESSING TABLE.

In the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Date about 1850 (?).

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Fig. 307.

MAHOGANY TOILET-STAND.

2 ft. 10½ ins. high × 1 ft. 3½ ins. wide × 1 ft. 3½ ins. deep.

Sight size of glass, 13⅜ ins. × 9¾ ins.

Date about 1790.

Fig. 308.

MAHOGANY WASHSTAND.

2 ft. 8½ ins. high × 1 ft. 3 ins. wide × 1 ft. 2 ins. deep.

Date about 1790.

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The well-known satinwood dressing-table from the Victoria and Albert Museum, reproduced here in Fig. 306, may appear to constitute an exception to the rule regarding the type of toilet-table in use during the eighteenth century. There are many reasons, however, for supposing that this piece, exquisite as it is, dates from a later period, and was probably the work of either Johnstone & Jeanes, or Wright & Mansfield. The satinwood is of a kind very unusual for the earlier period assigned to the piece, and the finish is undoubtedly that of the "French" polisher of 1850. There are also at least three other replicas in existence, to my own knowledge, which were evidently made at the same period, an unusual contingency were this an authentic example of the Sheraton period. Another trifling, but significant detail, is that the glass is either a replacement—which is very unlikely, as a delicate and valuable piece such as this would not be subjected to rough usage, and had such occurred there would have been other evidences of the fact—or is comparatively modern. The dovetailing of the drawers appears to suggest the hand of a foreign—probably a German—cabinet-maker, a circumstance not unlikely in the shops of the two firms before mentioned, but very improbable in the later eighteenth century. Wright & Mansfield made many of these adaptations of the style of Sheraton to modern requirements during their business career, the workmanship of which was always of a very high quality. Had this dressing-table been made before 1800, the obvious superiority of the pattern, as compared with those of the enclosed type, would, almost certainly, have ousted the latter from popular, or aristocratic favour, and

Fig. 309.
MAHOGANY WASHSTAND.
In the possession of A. C. de Pinna, Esq.
2 ft. 9¼ ins. high. Top, 17¾ ins. × 17¾ ins.
Date about 1795.

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Fig. 310.

PAINTED AND DECORATED BEDSTEAD.

In the possession of Messrs. Gill & Reigate.

7 ft. 0 ins. long × 5 ft. 0 ins. wide × 9 ft. 2 ins. high.

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we should expect to find numerous examples of the newer and more convenient form preserved at the present day, which is certainly not the fact. Added to this, there is evidence, in the chronicles of the house of Gillow, to show that enclosed dressing-tables—which had little or nothing to recommend them, in comparison—were made up to the close of the eighteenth century, and for some years after.

The fashions in the costume of the ladies of the last quarter of the eighteenth century changed with almost kaleidoscopic rapidity, and were the subject of numerous "skits" in the periodicals of the time. The following, from the *London Magazine* of 1777, is a good example of the sly fun poked at the extravagances in dress of the fair sex at this period:—

Give Chloe a bushel of horse-hair and wool,
Of paste and pomatum a pound:
Ten yards of gay ribbon to deck her sweet skull,
And gauze to encompass it round.

Of all the bright colours the rainbow displays
Be those ribbons which hang on her head;
Be her flounces adapted to make the folks gaze,
And about the whole work be they spread.

Let her flaps fly behind for a yard at the least,
Let her curls meet just under her chin;
Let these curls be supported, to keep up the jest,
With an hundred instead of one pin.

Let her gown be tucked up to the hip on each side,
Shoes too high for to walk or to jump;
And to deck the sweet creature complete for a bride,
Let the corkcutter make her a rump.

Thus finish'd in taste, while on Chloe you gaze,
You may take the dear charmer for life;
But never undress her, for, out of her stays,
You'll find you have lost half your wife!

The changes of fashion before referred to occurred with such bewildering frequency that it is not possible to give a pen-picture of the female costume at this period which would hold good even for a single year. Fairholt, in his *Costume in England*, quotes the following from the *Universal Magazine* of 1780 as showing how these constant changes in the last quarter of the eighteenth century were ridiculed at the time:—

Now dress'd in a cap, now naked in none;
Now loose in a mob, now close in a Joan:
Without handkerchief now, and now buried in ruff;
Now plain as a Quaker, now all of a puff;
Now a shape in neat stays, now a slattern in jumps;
Now high in French heels, now low in your pumps;
Now monstrous in hoop, now trapish, and walking
With your petticoats clung to your heels like a maulkin;
Like the cock on the tower, that shows you the weather,
You are hardly the same for two days together.

The hoop skirt was still retained for fashionable functions until about 1796, and at the close of the fashion was of more preposterous size than it had ever been before. Huge wreaths of flowers and swags of coloured silks and ribbon still further

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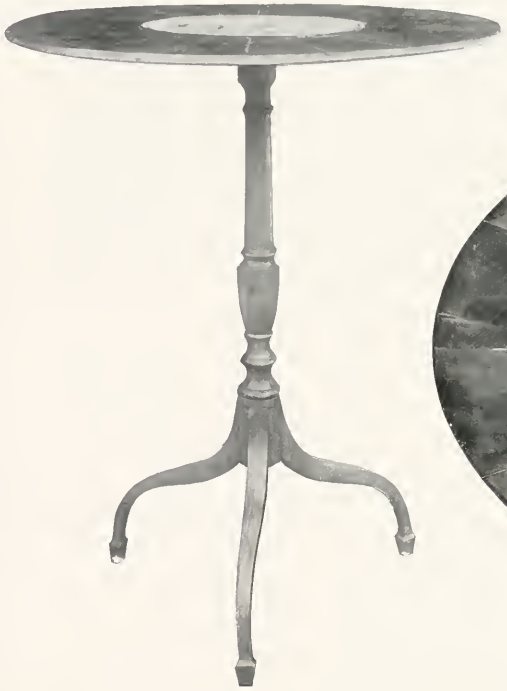

Fig. 311.
CHESTNUT TRIPOD TABLE.
2 ft. 6½ ins. high.

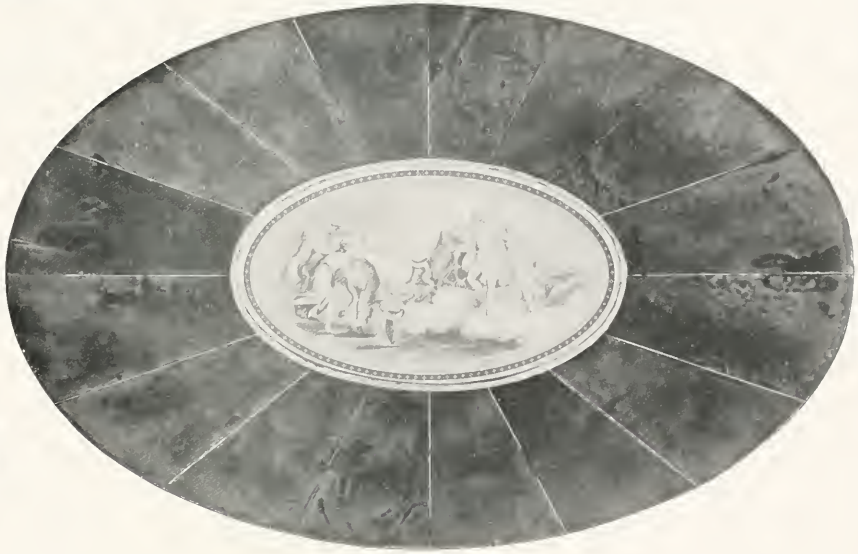

Fig. 312.
THE TOP OF THE CHESTNUT TRIPOD TABLE,
Fig. 311.
21 ins. × 13½ ins.

Date about 1790–5.

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Fig. 313.
MAHOGANY WORK TABLE.
1 ft. 5 ins. wide · 1 ft. 3 ins. deep.
2 ft. 6½ ins. high.
Date about 1795.

period, as illustrated in the chapter on "Tripod Furniture" in the second volume of this book, do not appear to have been made after about 1780. George III. was the recipient of a memorial from the wigmakers of London, praying that he would lend his august patronage and example to the renewal of the fashion, and pleading that since gentlemen had taken to wearing their own hair, the trade of the wigmaker had declined to the point of ruin. Another petition, in derision of the first, was also presented to royalty, showing emphasised the enormity, and the fair sex at a royal levee must have been veritable martyrs to fashion. George IV., if he did no more (and it is doubtful whether any further claims can be made on his behalf) than abolish the hoop by royal command, and cause the finest main road in England to be ordered and kept for his royal pleasures, may yet claim the gratitude of the English people, if only on the general principle that thanks for services not performed and favours not bestowed is a somewhat futile quality, and that it is as well to be grateful for what one receives, be it ever so little.

The wearing of wigs and powder for men had also gone out of fashion towards the end of the reign of George III., which may account for the fact that the wig-stands of the Chippendale

Fig. 314.
MAHOGANY WRITING AND WORK TABLE.
1 ft. 10 ins. wide · 1 ft. 7 ins. deep · 2 ft. 7 ins. high.
Date about 1790.

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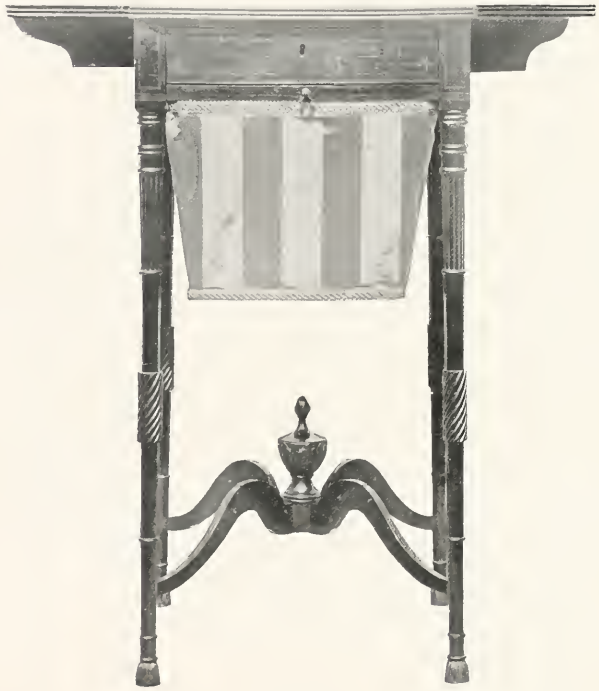

Fig. 315.

MAHOGANY WORK TABLE.

In the possession of A. R. Stilwell Freeland, Esq.

2 ft. 5 ins. high. Top, 2 ft. 2 ins. total width × 1 ft. 5 ins. deep.
Flaps, 6 ins. wide.

Date about 1790–5.

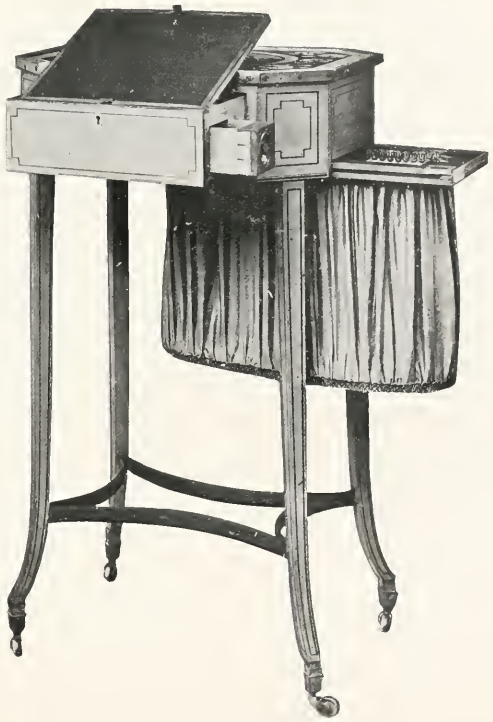

Fig. 316.

SATINWOOD WORK TABLE.

1 ft. 6 ins. wide × 1 ft. 1 in. deep × 2 ft. 5 ins. high.

Date about 1795–1800.

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Fig. 317.

SATINWOOD WORK TABLE.

1 ft. 6½ ins. wide × 1 ft. 1 in. deep × 2 ft. 4½ ins. high.

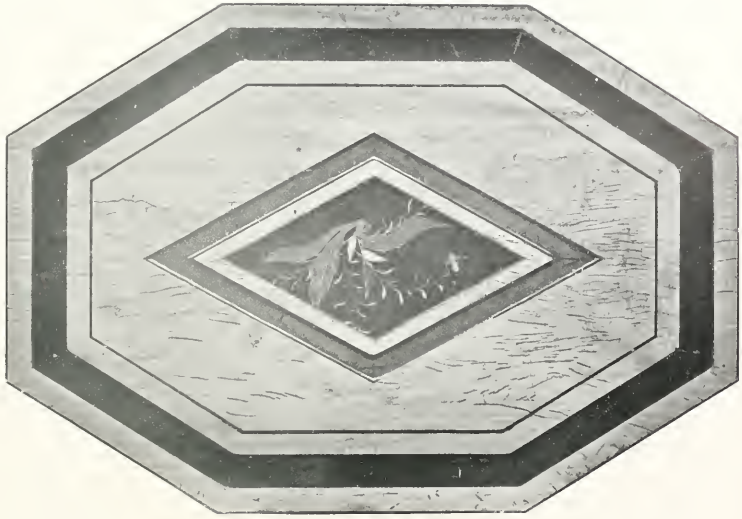

Fig. 318.

THE TOP OF THE WORK TABLE, Fig. 317.

1 ft. 6½ ins. wide × 1 ft. 1 in. deep.

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that the trade of the maker of artificial limbs was also in a moribund condition, and beseeching that the King would lend his royal favour to the introduction of wooden legs in the court circle.

If the fashionable dressing tables of the later eighteenth century were far removed from the ornate pieces of furniture generally used at the present day, the washstands of the period were more primitive still. Fig. 307 combines this office with that of the toilet table, a mirror, hinged on the top and strutted below, being attached to a sliding frame rising behind the hole cut in the top for the basin. The next example, Fig. 308, is chiefly notable for the delicate proportions and the beautiful figure of the

Fig. 319.

SATINWOOD TABLE.

In the possession of C. H. F. Kindermann, Esq.

Table: 1 ft. 10½ ins. wide × 1 ft. 4 ins. deep × 2 ft. 5½ ins. high.

Book Carrier: 1 ft. 7 ins. wide × 9 ins. deep × 1 ft. 3 ins. total height to top of handle.

Date about 1790–5.

Fig. 320.

MAHOGANY DRAWING TABLE.

2 ft. wide × 1 ft. 6 ins. deep × 2 ft. 5 ins. high.

Date about 1790.

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Fig. 321.

SATINWOOD TABLE.

Table: 1 ft. 3½ ins. wide × 1 ft. 1½ ins. deep × 2 ft. 4 ins. high.

Book Carrier: 1 ft. 3 ins. wide × 9¾ ins. deep × 8 ins. high.

Total height: 1 ft. 4½ ins.

Date about 1795–1800.

wood, the effect of which is still further enhanced by the bow sweep of the front. Fig. 309 is of a rarer type, the delicate turned legs, ornamented with spiral flutes and carved water-leaf decoration, indicating the direct influence of Thomas Sheraton. The tops are hinged with card-table butts, to resist a strain placed upon them when open. As a piece of simple but thoughtful designing, this piece would be difficult to equal in much of the furniture produced at this later period.

The four-post bedsteads of the later half of the eighteenth century have already been referred to in the second volume, and in general character they do

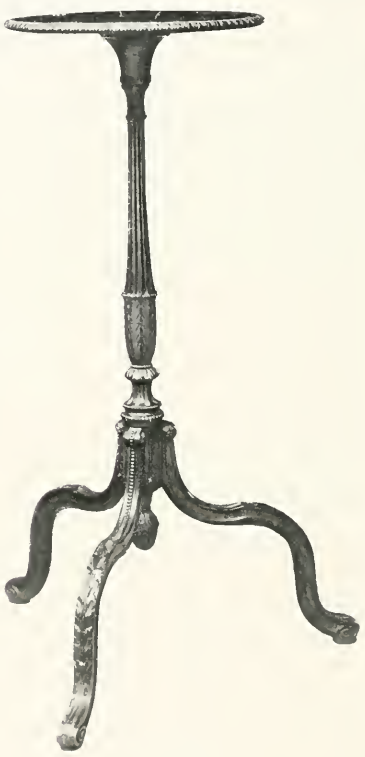

Fig. 322.

MAHOGANY TRIPOD TABLE.

In the possession of W. Clare Lees, Esq.

2 ft. 9½ ins. high. Top: 18½ ins. × 13¾ ins.

Date about 1790–5.

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Fig. 323.

SYCAMORE AND CHESTNUT WRITING BUREAU.

3 ft. 7 ins. high · 1 ft. 11 ins. wide × 1 ft. 5 ins. deep.

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not vary to any extent until its close. Fig. 310 is given to show that the fashion of japanning already mentioned in foregoing chapters, had extended to the bedroom, with an effect in the direction of greater simplicity in design, to allow fuller scope to the decorator in place of the carver. These painted bedsteads were usually finished in light colourings—cream, blue, or green—with hangings of large-patterned flowered chintzes. Considerable sums were frequently expended on the state beds, until the close of the eighteenth century, although the fashion for the elaborate creations of the brothers Adam had been considerably modified during the last twenty years.

It is in the smaller articles of furniture intended for the drawing-room that the school of Sheraton is well distinguished from that of Hepplewhite. Not only are the designs, as a general rule, of lighter character, but also the choice of materials differs widely, such as, for example, in the small tripod table illustrated in Fig. 311. The top is veneered with thin green horn, inset in a small channelling of brass. In the centre is a brass frame, glazed, containing a Bartollozzi lithograph in sanguine, in the classical manner of the period. The top is edged with an engraved brass fillet, fixed

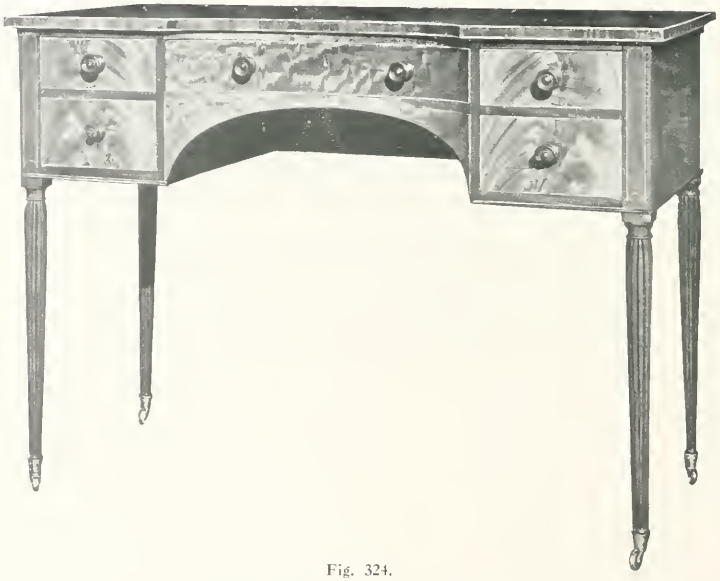

Fig. 324.
MAHOGANY WRITING TABLE.
In the possession of W. C. Clare Lees, Esq.
3 ft. 8 ins. wide 2 ft. 4 ins. high.
Date about 1795–1800.

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with round-headed screws. The pillar and tripod is made from chestnut, a wood frequently used in lieu of satinwood during the last twenty years of the eighteenth century, and frequently mistaken for it. The figured satinwood—the East India—had supplanted the West India in popular favour, and, although imported to some extent, the demand was largely in excess of the supply, with the result that the cost became prohibitive, and cheaper home-grown woods, such as chestnut and sycamore, were frequently substituted.

The "pouch" or work table was a very fashionable piece at this period, although of probably very little real use, the taste for needlework as an occupation of the titled ladies, which we have already seen was a marked characteristic of the reigns of William III. and Anne, having declined considerably in the latter half of the eighteenth century. A considerable amount of quiet taste and conscientious workmanship was often expended on these "pouch" tables, as in Fig. 313, for example, with its pretty chequered

Fig. 325.

MAHOGANY PEMBROKE TABLE.

3 ft. 3 ins. wide · 1 ft. 9 ins. deep × 2 ft. 6 ins. high.

Date about 1790-1800.

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edges to the top and frieze and delicate turning and fluting of the legs. Fig. 314 has a drawer fitted with a writing slope lined with green cloth in a small satinwood lipping. A smaller drawer is contrived in the right-hand side of the larger, fitted with two ink-bottles, a wafer-slope, and a pen-well. The table is veneered with figured mahogany, inlaid with broad lines of holly and banded with cross-cut rosewood. The pouch, of green silk with a tasselled and knotted fringe below, is pleated on an open framework attached to a tongued slide running in grooves beneath the writing drawer. Fig. 315 is another example, with hinged flaps to the top supported on swing brackets. The turning and straight and spiral reeding of the legs is of a very unusual pattern.

A very perfect specimen of these small "pouch" tables is illustrated in the next example, Fig. 316, where the drawer with its writing slope and pull-out pen-and-ink drawer is clearly shown. The top is inlaid with a marqueterie of rosewood and ebony, and although this table is late in character, it is surprisingly dainty for the period when the style of Sheraton was beginning to be overpowered by that of the English Empire. Fig. 317 is solely a work table, the top being fitted with a lift-out tray, divided by partitions into four compartments. The pouch, with its frame, pulls out sideways, the pleated silk on the front being stretched on a separate frame attached to the legs. The top is inlaid with lines of ebony, with a centre and broad border of black lacquer—a most unusual combination.

Fig. 326.
MAHOGANY PEMBROKE TABLE.
2 ft. 4 ins. wide · 1 ft. 4 ins. deep · 2 ft. 6 ins. high
Date about 1790–1800.

A table with a loose book-rack, as in Fig. 319, was known as a "sheveret" or "cheveret" at this date, the precise etymology of which is somewhat obscure. This table is of West India satinwood, with the drawer rails and bandings of cross-cut rosewood veneer. All the drawers have sides of pencil

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cedar and bottoms of Madeira wood. The drawer in the table has a hinged writing slope, with a narrow lipping, lined with a modern paste-grain green morocco, with divisions for ink and pens on the right-hand side. Standing on the top is a case containing three drawers with ivory knobs, and a book-rack above. A handle of bent three-ply wood is provided to admit of the case being lifted off the table if required elsewhere.

Fig. 320 is a small drawing table of the same date and of similar general form. The wood is a highly bleached mahogany, almost of the tone of satinwood. The top is lipped and lined with cloth. The angle of the slope and the fillet on the front indicate that this table was intended for the use of an artist rather than a writer, the drawer on the right hand being fitted to contain the small bladders of powder-colour then in use.

Fig. 321 shows the later fashion of the "sheveret" of the very close of the century, with the tapered legs turned out at the bottom and castored—details more

Fig. 327.

MAHOGANY PEMBROKE TABLE.

3 ft. 6 ins. long × 1 ft. 2½ ins. deep × 2 ft. 6 ins. high.

Flaps: 1 ft. 2 ins. deep.

Date about 1790–1800.

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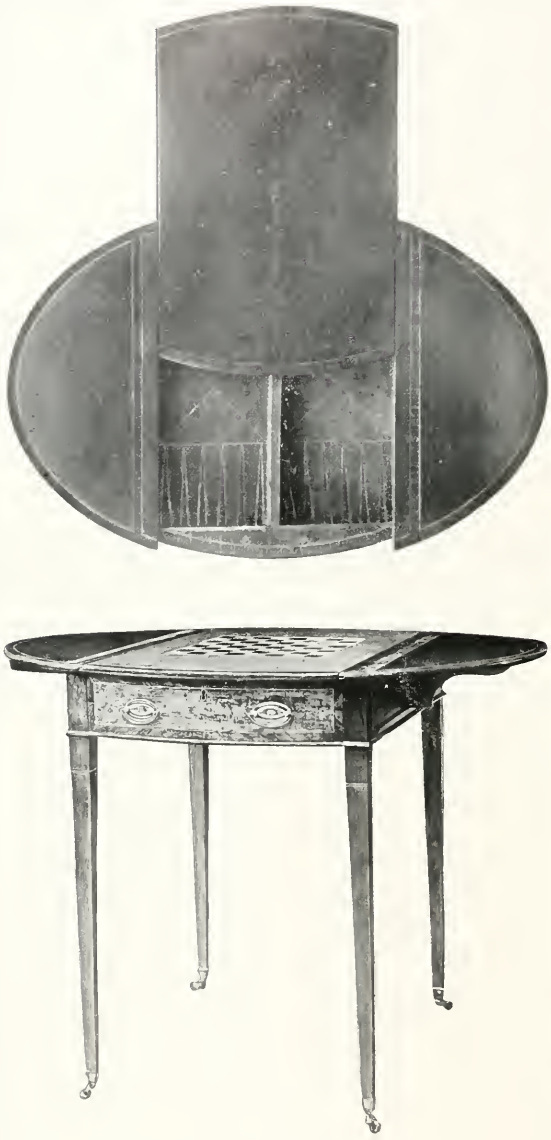

Fig. 328.

MAHOGANY INLAID GAMES TABLE.

2 feet 4½ ins. high. Top: 20 ins. · 22 ins. when closed
1 ft. 8 ins. × 3 ft. 3 ins. when open.

Date about 1795.

noticeable in chairs than in furniture at this date. Fig. 322 is one of the tripod tables or stands intended for pot-pourri bowls. This example is of fine quality, the carving beautifully cut, and the wood of exceptional figure and texture.

Fig. 323 is an example of the small writing cabinets of this period, fitted with a pull-forward tambour—that is, a number of beads glued transversely on canvas. This system of the tambour front had a great advantage over the solid cylinder fall, requiring very little space behind the pigeon-holes, whereas the cylinder necessitated a semi-circular arc which had to be allowed for in the depth of the piece. This bureau is veneered with sycamore and chestnut, left in the natural colour to imitate satinwood, and is inlaid with marqueterie of light-coloured woods. The oval handles are delicate with flat engraved back plates plated with silver. The turned feet, carved with the water-leaf decoration, are typical of Sheraton's early period.

Small writing tables of the type illustrated in Fig. 324

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appear to have been made solely for the bedroom. In spite of the fact that Chippendale popularised to some extent the library table—the elaborate examples at Nostell and Harewood were probably of his conception, on which Robert Adam merely superimposed his ornamental details—these were pieces intended only for the large apartments of the very wealthy. In an age of small rooms, and with the one devoted to many purposes, the eighteenth century was essentially the age of the bureau or the secretaire enclosed in a piece of furniture such as a bookcase of a "tallboy" chest of drawers. The notable features of Fig. 325 are the charming pattern of the reeded legs, the fine figure of the mahogany, and the internal sweep of the centre—an obvious concession to the hooped skirts of the period.

The "Pembroke" or hinged-flap table is essentially a pattern of the Sheraton period, differing from those of the Chippendale school in the fact that hinged brackets are provided for the support of the tops instead of the former pull-out leg hinged to the side framing. Three examples are given in Figs. 325, 326, and 327, which call for no especial mention. In Fig. 328, a "games" table, the same device is adopted, the hinged brackets being visible in the reproduction. The top is inlaid as a chessboard on the under side, and is made to slide in grooves and to be reversible when required. The top when removed discloses two compartments fitted for backgammon. This game is one of considerable antiquity in England, and was generally referred to as "the tables." Although now relegated to country vicarages and the homes of the smaller squirearchy, it was a fashionable amusement during the eighteenth century, and one at which considerable sums were won and lost by the "bucks" of the Georgian period and the days of the Regency.

Fig. 329.
SATINWOOD DECORATED TABLE.
1 ft. 11 ins. wide × 1 ft. 7 ins. deep × 2 ft. 4½ ins. high.
Date about 1790.

Fig. 329 is one of the small oval "parlour" tables of this period, of satinwood banded with

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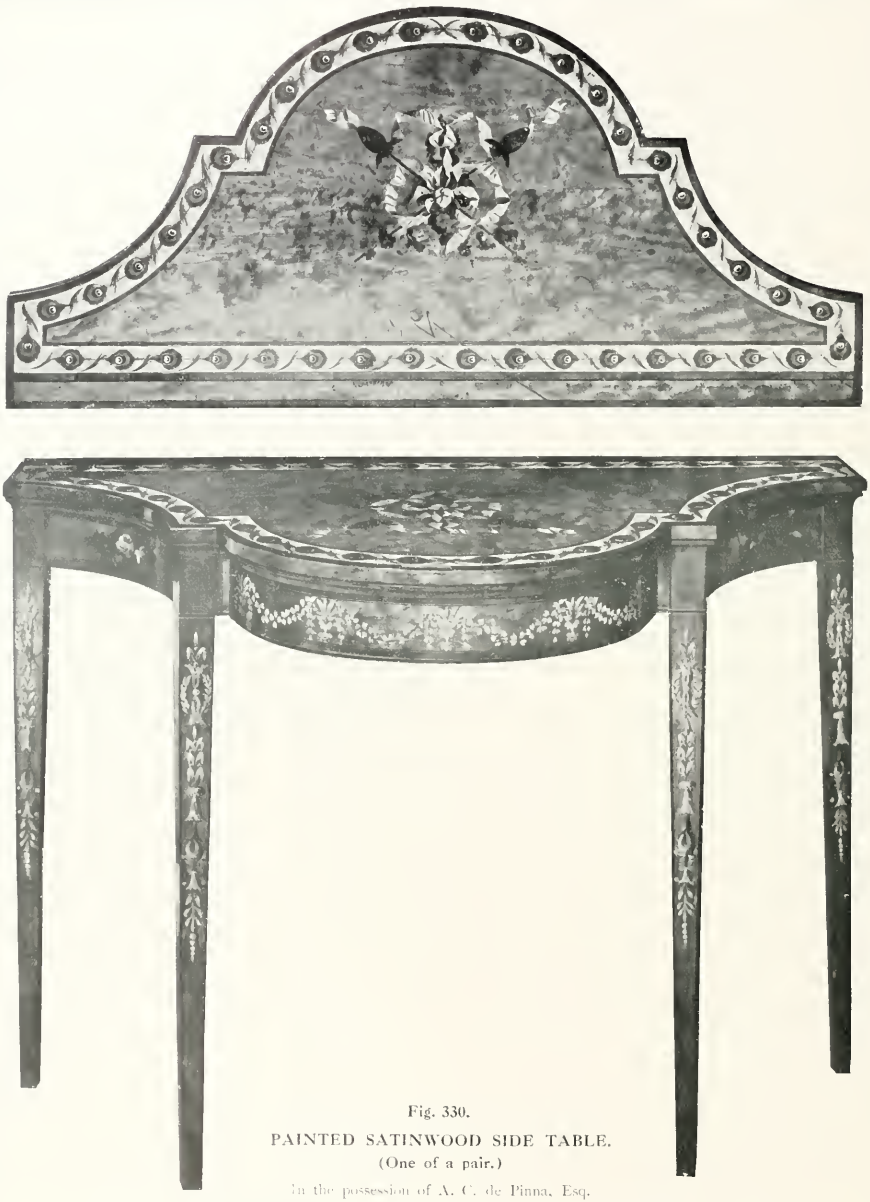

Fig. 330.

PAINTED SATINWOOD SIDE TABLE.

(One of a pair.)

In the possession of A. C. de Pinna, Esq.

3 ft. 7¼ ins. wide × 1 ft. 9 in. deep, over top. 2 ft. 6½ ins. high.

Date about 1795.

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THE TOP OF THE COMMODE below.

Fig. 331.

HAREWOOD COMMODE. (One of a pair.)

In the possession of J. Corkill, Esq.

4 ft. $3\frac{1}{2}$ ins. wide × 2 ft. 10 ins. high × 1 ft. 0 ins. deep.

Date about 1790–95.

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rosewood and decorated with a central oval containing a classical figure in the Pergolesi manner. Fig. 330 is one of a pair of side tables of remarkable quality for this late date. The veneer is choice West India satinwood—a sure indication of a period later than that of Hepplewhite, to which this table might otherwise be referred. The top is painted in the centre with an elaborately knotted ribbon and surrounded with a border of peacocks' feathers. The legs and framings are decorated with garlands and swags of flowers, all exquisitely painted. Tables of this kind were made to stand between windows, and generally in pairs, as the usual saloons of this period had nearly always three windows, two or four being, for some unknown reason, very exceptional. It will be noticed that a strip of the top, at the back, is left plain, evidently to accommodate one of the tall gilt mirrors of this date; and the top also overhangs at the back to this extent to permit of the table being placed over the surbase and close to the wall. The French fashion of the furniture "*d'appui*" or

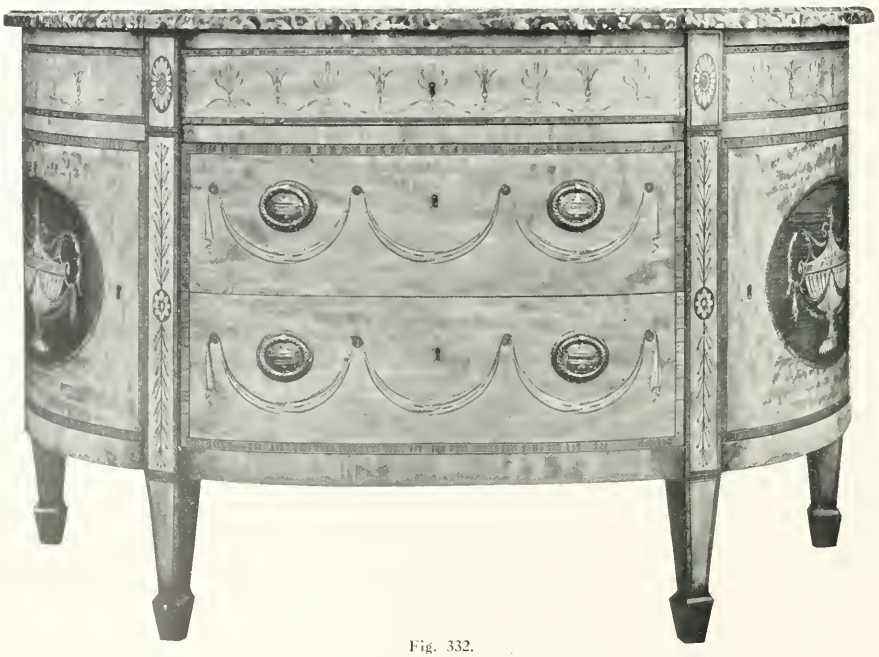

Fig. 332.

SATINWOOD COMMODE.

In the possession of C. H. F. Kindermann, Esq.

4 ft. 4 ins. wide · 2 ft. 8½ ins. high · 1 ft. 0½ ins. deep.

Date about 1790.

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of "leaning height" had ousted many of the tall pieces from the more important apartments at the close of the eighteenth century. The commode had become an indispensable adjunct to the side table. Sometimes the French character of the marble top was retained, but more often the tops were elaborately inlaid with engraved marqueterie. Fig. 331 is one of a pair made for Lismore Castle, in original state excepting for the unsightly stump feet—an addition of the mid-Victorian period—and the moulding of the top, which has been re-worked. This example gives a good idea of the workmanship and expense which was still lavished on the more important furniture at this date. This commode is veneered with "harewood"—that is, sycamore stained with oxide of iron—with the frieze and pilasters of chestnut, the whole inlaid with an elaborately engraved marqueterie in the taste of Robert Adam. The shamrocks on the top, coupled with the honeysuckle and ribboned swag ornament of the frieze, appear to indicate Irish manufacture in imitation of the earlier London fashions.

Fig. 333.

LACQUERED TABLE.

In the possession of Messrs. Gill & Reigate.

3 ft. 5 ins. wide × 2 ft. 3 ins. deep when flaps are down. Flaps, 12 ins. wide. 2 ft. 6 ins. high.

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Fig. 334.

MAHOGANY INLAID POLE SCREEN.

Shield, 24½ ins. high × 21 ins. extreme width.

Extreme height, 4 ft. 11 ins.

Date about 1795–1806.

Fig. 335.

MAHOGANY POLE SCREEN.

Panel, 18 ins. · 12¾ ins.

Extreme height, 5 ft. 4½ ins.

Date about 1795.

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Fig. 336.
MAHOGANY POLE SCREEN.
Panel, 10¾ ins. diameter. Extreme height, 5 ft. 3 ins.
Date about 1790.

Fig. 337.
MAHOGANY POLE SCREEN.
Panel, 17 ins. × 11 ins. Extreme height, 5 ft. 5 ins.
Date about 1790.

Fig. 338.
BLACK AND GOLD POLE SCREEN.
Panel, 12½ ins. · 8½ ins. Extreme height, 5 ft. 2 ins.
Date about 1800.

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The next example, Fig. 332, is a characteristic London-made piece, with the French fashion of the marble top. The whole is veneered with satinwood inlaid with engraved marqueterie, in the style of Robert Adam. The workmanship and the woods used indicate a later date, however, and the projecting pilasters, breaking up the frieze and the whole sweep of the front, are foreign to both the styles of Hepplewhite or Adam.

During the later period of Sheraton, an attempt was made to revive the taste for the Chinese decoration so popular during the era of Chippendale. Lacquerwork, often of a very high quality, was introduced, superimposed on furniture made in imitation of bamboo—a somewhat crude attempt at Oriental forms. A chair in this manner will be illustrated later on in Fig. 343, and the table shown here in Fig. 333 is a good example of this manner. The legs are jointed in imitation of bamboo, and lacquered a brownish red. The top is lacquered in brilliant red, with a black oval in the centre decorated in raised and gilded gesso. The border corresponds with the centre. The fashion for this work does not appear to have been a lasting one, judging from the paucity of existing specimens, and it has very little to recommend it, from the artistic point of view.

The pole-screen was a very familiar piece of furniture at this date, its use being somewhat negligible as a protection to the face from the heat of a fire. Its popularity was more probably due to the fact that the panels were used to display the feminine skill with the needle, these being nearly always covered with embroidery. Although comparatively useless as pieces of furniture, however, a good deal of taste in the design of these pole screens was frequently displayed, such as in the tripods of Figs. 336 and 337, and the stand of Fig. 338. The latter is finished in black and gold, with a panel painted on silk—another feminine accomplishment at this date.

The pure style of Sheraton persisted until the close of the eighteenth century, the former high standard, both of design and workmanship, being, with some exceptions, well maintained. The decline of taste, however, was already apparent in numerous details of form and ornamentation, and in many ways the close of the "golden age" of English cabinet-making was already heralded. With the first years of the nineteenth century the tide of the "English Empire" began to set in, submerging all that was formerly tasteful and refined, and obliging the last of the great furniture designers of England to follow with its current, forsaking the high traditions of English furniture which he had previously done so much to uphold.

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To face p. 309.

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Chapter XVI.

Sheraton's Chairs and Settees.

THOMAS SHERATON may be aptly described as the exponent of the square-back chair in contradistinction to Hepplewhite, who was the advocate of the shield and oval forms, together with the variations which have already been described and illustrated. Sheraton, as we have seen, gives only two examples of the shield form of chair-back, and neither can be described as being either typical or successful. Sheraton did not appear to have an appreciation for the possibilities of the shield or the oval, or perhaps was desirous of striking out in a new path unfettered by the Hepplewhite traditions. In this he was eminently successful; in fact, as a designer of chairs he was possibly the superior of Hepplewhite. The credit for this is as much due to the simplicity of his outlines as to the designs themselves, the shield and oval back presenting many difficulties to the inexperienced chair-maker which were absent in those of the square type. Having regard to the fact that we can only measure the qualities of Hepplewhite and Sheraton respectively by the *Guide* and the *Drawing Book*, in the former of which no square-back chairs are illustrated, and in the latter the shield and oval forms are practically ignored, it is a curious instance of the reckless system of classification which has been applied to the furniture of this period, that both shield- and oval-backed chairs have been usually described as Sheraton, and Hepplewhite has even been credited with the introduction of the square-back, in utter defiance of the only available evidence of authorship—that afforded by the two design books before referred to. It is in the chair models from 1780 to 1792, and those from 1790 to 1805, that we have the most reliable pieces of furniture for establishing a distinction between the work of the two craftsmen. When we enter the domain of the cabinet-maker as distinguished from that of the maker of chairs, the greatest difficulty is experienced in tracing the influence of Thomas Sheraton. Fulfilling the function merely of a designer, and leaving the creations of his brain to be resolved into actuality by other cabinet-makers, with such modifications as their judgment or other circumstances dictated, added to the fact that actual *Drawing Book* pieces were exceedingly rare at the period, and that Sheraton borrowed freely from Adam, Hepplewhite, Shearer, and others, without the slightest acknowledgment of his indebtedness, it will easily be seen that the Sheraton style is bounded by exceedingly arbitrary limits, regulated to a considerable extent by personal taste and opinion. Measured by the standard of the *Drawing Book*, however, there are

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certain patterns, particularly of chairs, which are illustrated in that book, which do not appear in any other of prior date, and these we are justified in attributing to Thomas Sheraton, and in describing them as being in his style. So well defined are these particular features that the general form of Sheraton's chairs can be resolved into two or three types. Figs. 339 and 340 may be said to epitomise these, the first having the dropped top rail, square back and seat and diamond-latticed splat, the second having the straight top rail, turned outer uprights, square pateræ on the corners, rounded seat, and the central splat a combination of the lattice and baluster. It will be found that these details, either singly or in combination, are found in nearly all of Sheraton's chairs until the first years of the nineteenth century, when, forsaking his earlier style, he followed the tide in the direction of the so-called "English Empire." It will be seen that the French fashions of this period were followed in chronological sequence at almost identical dates, Fig. 340, for example, being purely Louis Seize in character, and the fashion changing to the "English Empire" at the period when the Corsican lieutenant of artillery had

Figs. 339 and 340.

MAHOGANY CHAIRS.

3 ft. 1 in. from floor to top of back.
2 ft. 0 ins. across front of seat.
1 ft. 7 ins. depth of seat.
1 ft. 5½ ins. from floor to top of seat.

3 ft. 0 ins. from floor to top of back.
1 ft. 9 ins. extreme depth of seat.
1 ft. 8 ins. depth of seat.
1 ft. 4½ ins. from floor to top of seat.

Date about 1790-5.

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Fig. 341.

WHITE PAINTED AND GILT CHAIR.

3 ft. 0 ins. from floor to top of back. 2 ft. 0 ins. across front of seat.
1 ft. 6½ ins. depth of seat. 1 ft. 4 ins. from floor to top of seat.

Date about 1790–5.

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begun to rule the destinies of the greater part of Europe. It is strange how the French Empire style, a vogue apparently temporary in character and one with little or no artistic recommendation, should have affected the furniture fashions of some five or six countries, and in the case of Germany in such a lasting way that its influence persisted for the greater part of a century.

Fig. 341 is a typical chair of the early Sheraton period. The frame is of beech, painted white and parcel gilt. The back is nearly filled with a Roman diagonal lattice, with carved pateræ on the intersections. The top rail is straight, rounded on the corners, with a "scratched" double reed on the face. The outer uprights are turned and fluted, dowelled into the top rail, and crested with small carved pateræ above. The entire character of this chair is purely French, and it would be possible

Fig. 342.

BIRCH PAINTED CHAIR.

In the possession of J. D. Phillips, Esq.

2 ft. 10¾ ins. from floor to top of back.
1 ft. 11½ ins. across front of seat.
1 ft. 8 ins. depth of seat.
Back, 1 ft. 8 ins. across.

Date about 1795.

Fig. 343.

LACQUERED CHAIR.

2 ft. 10½ ins. high.
Seat.—1 ft. 9 ins. wide.
1 ft. 5¾ ins. deep.
1 ft. 6 ins. high.

Date about 1795.

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Fig. 344.

WHITE PAINTED AND GILT CHAIR.

2 ft. 9 ins. from floor to top of back. 1 ft. 9 ins. across front of seat.
1 ft. 8½ ins. depth of seat. 1 ft. 4½ ins. from floor to top of seat.

Date about 1790–5.

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Fig. 345.

MAHOGANY SETTEE.

6 ft. 8 ins. long × 2 ft. 10½ ins. from floor to top of back.

Date about 1790–5.

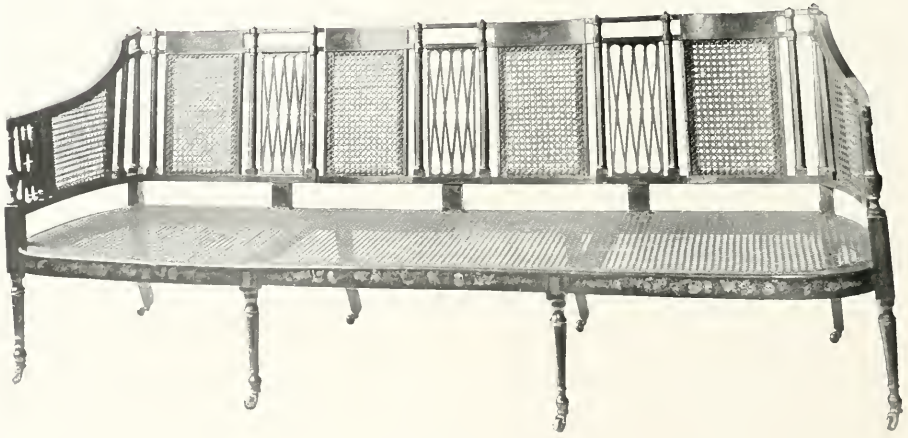

Fig. 346.

PAINTED SETTEE.

In the possession of Messrs. Colling & Young.

7 ft. 6 ins. long. Seat, 1 ft. 4 ins. from floor × 2 ft. 1 in. back to front.
Height from floor to top of back, 2 ft. 10 ins.

Date about 1790–5.

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to illustrate examples of the later Louis Seize period which, with the exception of the latticed splat in the back, would resemble it almost line for line.

Fig. 342 possesses several details which are typically Sheraton in character, notably the broad moulded top rail and the latticed splat in the back. Chairs of this kind belong to Sheraton's decorated period, being usually japanned in white and gold, with the panelled top rail painted with cherubs and Arcadian scenes in the manner of Pergolesi or Cipriani. Fig. 343 illustrates another method of finishing chairs of this period; a covering of brown lacquer decorated with Chinese forms and figures, the framing being turned in imitation of bamboo. A table in this manner has already been illustrated in Fig. 333. The former taste for Chinese decoration was revived during the last two decades of the eighteenth century, although in a far more refined manner than formerly. Large pictorial wall-papers were imported from China and Japan, and used for the walls in saloons and large drawing-rooms, as at Ramsbury Manor, Coker Court, and at the former archiepiscopal palace at Croydon, Addington Park. In

Fig. 347.

MAHOGANY CHAIR.

3 ft. 2 ins. from floor to top of back.
1 ft. 11 ins. across front of seat.
1 ft. 7½ ins. depth of seat.
1 ft. 5 ins. from floor to top of seat.

Date about 1790–5.

Fig. 348.

MAHOGANY CHAIR.

3 ft. 1 in. from floor to top of back.
1 ft. 9 ins. across front of seat.
1 ft. 7 ins. depth of seat.
1 ft. 6 ins. from floor to top of seat.

Date about 1795.

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Fig. 349.

SATINWOOD PAINTED SETTEE.

6 ft. 0 ins. wide across front of seat. 3 ft. 1¾ ins. from floor to top of back. 1 ft. 8 ins. depth of seat.

Date about 1795.

Fig. 350.

MAHOGANY DAY BED.

In the possession of Messrs. Williamson & Sons.

5ft. 10 ins. long × 2 ft. 3½ ins. deep × 3 ft. 1 in. height of back.

Date about 1790–1800.

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the designing of furniture to accord with these Chinese wall-papers no attempt was made at Oriental forms unless the imitation of bamboo, as in Fig. 343, may be described as such. Even lacquer was sparingly produced, although in the furniture decorated in this manner both the ground and the execution of the ornament reaches the greatest stage of perfection attained in English lacquer work during the whole of the eighteenth century.

Fig. 344 illustrates the baluster-back chair, and also the method of decorating with panels painted with the classical subjects familiarised in the engravings of Bartolozzi. It is difficult to appreciate the rare charm of isolated examples of the Sheraton decorated

Figs. 351 and 352.

SATINWOOD ARM AND SMALL CHAIRS.

In the possession of Messrs. A. B. Daniell & Son.

3 ft. 1 in. from floor to top of back.	3 ft. 0½ in. from floor to top of back.
2 ft. 0 ins. across front of seat.	1 ft. 10¾ ins. across front of seat.
1 ft. 8 ins. depth of seat.	1 ft. 7 ins. depth of seat.
1 ft. 6 ins. from floor to top of seat.	1 ft. 5½ ins. from floor to top of seat.

Date about 1790-5.

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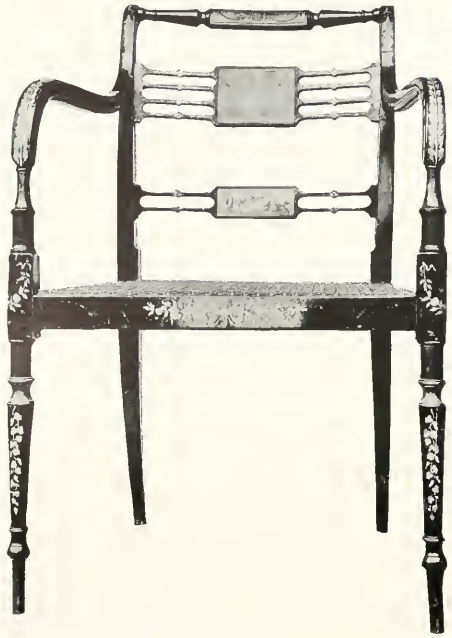

Fig. 353.

BEECH CHAIR. (Painted and gilt.)

In the Victoria and Albert Museum.

3 ft. 1 in. from floor to top of back.

1 ft. 11½ ins. across front of seat.

1 ft. 8 ins. depth of seat, back to front.

1 ft. 5 ins. from floor to top of seat.

Date about 1790-5.

Fig. 354.

BEECH CHAIR. (Painted and parcel gilt.)

3 ft. 0 ins. from floor to top of back.

1 ft. 11 ins. across front of seat.

1 ft. 8 ins. depth of seat, back to front.

1 ft. 5 in. from floor to top of seat.

Date about 1795-1800.

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Fig. 355.

Fig. 356.

BEECH PAINTED CHAIRS.

In the Victoria and Albert Museum.

3 ft. 0½ in. from floor to top of back.
1 ft. 11 ins. across front of seat.
1 ft. 7½ ins. depth of seat back to front.
1 ft. 5 ins. from floor to top of seat.

3 ft. 0 ins. rom floor to top of back.
1 ft. 11½ ins. across front of seat.
1 ft. 8 ins. depth of seat back to front.
1 ft. 5 ins. from floor to top of seat.

Date about 1790–5.

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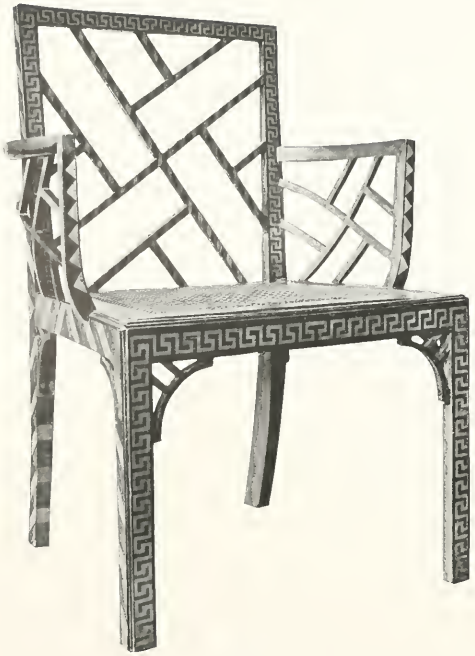

Fig. 357.

BEECH INLAID CHAIR.

In the Victoria and Albert Museum.

2 ft. 11½ ins. from floor to top of back.
1 ft. 10 ins. across front of seat.
1 ft. 7½ ins. depth of seat.
1 ft. 4½ ins. from floor to top of seat.

Date about 1790–1800.

Fig. 358.

PAINTED AND GILT CHAIR.

In the possession of J. D. Phillips, Esq.

3 ft. 1 in. high.
1 ft. 11½ ins. across seat.
1 ft. 8 ins. depth of seat from front to back.
1 ft. 5 ins. from floor to top of seat.

Date about 1800.

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period such as this chair, divorced from its proper surroundings. The lofty and grandiose apartments of the early and middle Georgian periods had given way to an era of quiet, home-like charm. The living rooms, in the usual type of house of the moderately wealthy, were usually low—from ten to twelve feet in height—panelled with a low framed dado with a small surbase or capping moulding, above which was a single panel from dado to cornice, generally from two feet six inches to four feet in width. This wall panelling was nearly always painted in shades of cream or greenish grey, and formed an admirable background for the black-and-gold frames of the engravings and prints of the period. Above this panelling was a small cornice, usually of wood and quite plain in section, with the ceiling either enriched with small swags radiating from a central flower, or more frequently quite plain, and painted to match the panelling of the walls. The chimneypiece was generally of the simple Adam type, in white or inlaid marbles, or of carved wood. On either side the chimney breast was boxed in by a cabinet cupboard, the upper doors glazed in square panes and circular-headed, with a subsidiary cornice following the same line and broken in the centre by a small keystone. The framing of the walls and dado panellings were usually square in section, and where mouldings were used in panels, as in the doors of the cupboards on either side of the fireplace, they were kept studiously small. Windows were deeply recessed, with panelled shutter boxes, reaching to within eighteen inches from the floor, with a low dado carried across on the face line of the flat architraves to form a window boxing or seat. These window seats were usually fitted with lift-up

Fig. 359.
MAHOGANY CHAIR.
2 ft. 10 ins. from floor to top of back.
2 ft. 10 ins. across front of seat.
1 ft. 7½ ins. depth of seat.
1 ft. 5½ ins. from floor to top of seat.
Date about 1795–1800.

Fig. 360.
MAHOGANY CHAIR.
2 ft. 10½ ins. from floor to top of back.
1 ft. 8½ ins. across front of seat.
1 ft. 5½ ins. depth of seat.
1 ft. 4½ ins. from floor to top of seat.
Date about 1800.

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lids, small, loose squab cushions being provided for greater comfort. The judicious admixture of mahogany, satinwood, harewood, japanned and sometimes lacquered furniture, in combination with the soft grey tone of these later eighteenth century apartments, produced an *ensemble* unrivalled for quiet charm in the whole history of eighteenth century furnishing.

Fig. 345 is one of the square-back settees of this period, made to accord with the chairs, the back upholstered and the seat fitted with a long, loose squab cushion. The turned legs on the ends are prolonged above their squares in vase-shaped balusters supporting the simple curved open arms, filled with a diamond lattice-work as in the backs of Figs. 342, 341, and 339. Fig. 346 is another example where the back and arms are filled with caned panels alternating with a similar latticework as in Fig. 345. The framework is of beech, japanned and painted with garlands of flowers, the whole being kept studiously low in tone. The height of the seat is proportioned to allow of a squab cushion as in the previous example. Fig. 347 is a mahogany chair of the same baluster-back French type as the preceding examples, the top rail being panelled and the five balusters placed directly underneath, joined on the top with painted arches of Gothic character. This chair differs from the others previously

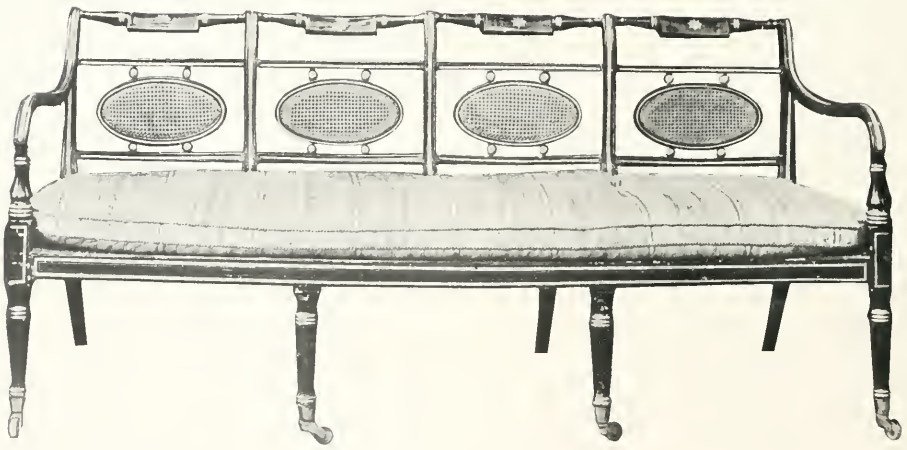

Fig. 361.

BEECH SETTEE. (Painted and Gilt.)

6 ft. 1 in. long across front of seat. 2 ft. 10 ins. from floor to top of back.
1 ft. $7\frac{1}{2}$ ins. depth of seat. 1 ft. $5\frac{3}{4}$ ins. from floor to top of seat.

Date 1795–1800.

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illustrated, in the substitution of the shaped and moulded arm support for the usual turned baluster.

Fig. 348 shows another type of chair-back of this period with the top rail raised in the centre and the back moulded as one complete panel. The central splat is pierced and latticed, tied together under the top rail with a pendant drapery. The legs are square, tapered, socketed under the seat rail, and finishing in moulded toes. Fig. 349 is a chair-back settee of the same form, in satinwood, decorated with ribbons and flowers, and having the square tapered leg socketed above the castor, which is more characteristic of Hepplewhite than Sheraton. The backs are each filled with five straight balusters, the centre one having a small rectangular panel painted with a spray of flowers. Viewed from the back, settees of this type appear to demand that each upright of the backs should be prolonged below the seat-rail and finish in a leg. Thus Fig. 349, from a front view, appears quite logical, but from the back seems to require eight legs. This is, perhaps, an inevitable consequence of the substitution of the square back for the Hepplewhite shield form. The name of "bar-back sofa" used in the *Guide* could be much more fittingly applied to this settee than the one so described by Hepplewhite.

Fig. 350 is a somewhat unusual piece, apparently a prototype of the mid-Victorian scroll-end couch. The "day-bed" as an article of furniture had lost its vogue by the close of the seventeenth century, when the use of the bed-chamber as a reception-room

Fig. 362.

MAHOGANY SETTEE.

6 ft. 6 ins. wide · 2 ft. 10 ins. high rom floor to top of back. 1 ft. 8½ ins. extreme depth of seat. 1 ft. 5½ ins. height of seat from floor.

Date 1795–1800.

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had also gone out of fashion. This example has the appearance of having been specially made, probably for an invalid. It is specifically a bed, as distinct from a couch, the framing being boxed to contain an upholstered mattress. The back is carved and balustered in the manner of 1790–1800.

Figs. 351 and 352 illustrate a departure from the backs of Figs. 348 and 349 in the shaping of the centre of the top rail. The stretcher rails uniting the legs are also very unusual in chairs of the Sheraton period, although this was a detail governed by the personal predilection of the chair-maker. It has probably been noticed that of Sheraton's designs of chairs in the *Drawing Book* very few show the chair complete, Sheraton evidently considering that the back was the only important part demanding illustration. In Figs. 351 and 352 the cresting of the outer uprights of the back and the second and fourth balusters with water-leaf capitals is a characteristic detail of this period.

There are certain events in the history of England and of Europe which serve as landmarks, as it were, and are fraught with great significance to our subject. In some instances the effect is long-continued and far-reaching, as in the case of the Revocation

Fig. 363.

Fig. 364.

MAHOGANY ARM AND SINGLE CHAIRS.

3 ft. 0½ ins. from floor to top of back.
1 ft. 11 ins. across front of seat.
1 ft. 6 ins. depth of seat.
1 ft. 6 ins. from floor to top of seat.

3 ft. 0 in. from floor to top of back.
1 ft. 9½ ins. across front of seat.
1 ft. 5½ ins. depth of seat.
1 ft. 6 ins. from floor to top of seat.

Date 1795–1800.

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of the Edict of Nantes, with which this book commenced. The accession of William the Third, the warfare between the rival East India Companies of England and Holland, the introduction of the Brunswick dynasty from Hanover, and the rise of Robert Adam, are further instances of radical changes in the development of English furniture arising from apparently trivial causes. The event, however, which served to direct the eyes of Europe in the direction of France in more marked fashion than had ever occurred before, was the execution of Louis XVI. and his young consort in 1792. Weak as the French king had been, misguided and cursed with a remarkable faculty of irritating national prejudices as Marie Antoinette undoubtedly was, the ingrained love of hereditary monarchy of Western Europe was enough to cause the nations to revolt against the barbarity of the punishment. The Reign of Terror which followed alienated every outside spark of sympathy for the French nation. It must have been known that the King and Queen of France died for the vices of the French aristocracy rather than for their own misdemeanours, but the wholesale slaughter which followed, the rise of the popular demagogues, the placing of supreme power of punishment in the hands of such men as Marat and Fouquier-Tinville, the true nobility of many of the victims, women as well as men, could not be reconciled with elementary notions of justice of nations at peace.

Both in costume and in furniture England had hitherto been content to follow in the steps of the French Court, but with the extirpation of the aristocracy and even the prescribing of the name, fashion changed in a marked degree. This is more noticeable with the chairs of the period than with the other furniture, the former having been hitherto modelled on French designs, often with little or no modification, whereas in the latter the general feeling had always been characteristically English in form, choice of woods, and methods of ornamentation.

Fig. 365.
MAHOGANY CORNER CHAIR.
2 ft. 9½ ins. high.
1 ft. 11½ ins. total width of seat.
Seat, 1 ft. 10 ins. × 1 ft. 6 ins.
Date about 1795–1800.

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Figs. 353 and 354 introduce the new fashion after 1792, which persisted until the "English Empire" style of Hope became firmly established in the first decade of the nineteenth century. These chairs may be described as typically English in character, and they are certainly the best of the creations of this period. They differ in one important respect from any other of the open-backed chairs of the entire eighteenth century, the Chippendale "ladder-back" designs only excepted, in the fact that the balusters or splats run from upright to upright instead of from top to seat rails. To attempt subdivisions of so marked a type as the one to which these chairs belong is, perhaps, somewhat pedantic, but it is possible. The legs of these lateral baluster chairs are always turned, either straight as in Fig. 353, or with the feet turned out as in the next example. In general, however, the former are usually earlier in character than the latter. The next point of difference is in the top rail, which is either turned and hollowed with a central panel, or flat with a slight sweep as in Fig. 355. Fig. 353 shows the earlier type of arm, dropping on to a turned baluster immediately above the leg, that of Fig. 354, where both arm and support are shaped, indicating a period within the last five years of the nineteenth century. These lateral baluster chairs were generally made of beech, for japanning, and they were usually painted black with lines and slight floral ornament of gold to give the effect of lacquerwork, as a relief to the satinwood and light japanned pieces of the period. A settee of this type has already been illustrated in Fig. 235 of the first volume, in the section devoted to lacquer decoration.

Fig. 366.
MAHOGANY CHAIR.
3 ft. 1 in. high × 1 ft. 7 ins. across seat.
Date about 1805.

Figs. 355 and 356 are further specimens of these beech painted chairs, the first having a somewhat original form of latticed back, and the arm support turned and fixed to the side rail of the seat. In the second the back is square, with a central oval carving radiating from a panel of the same shape. The turning of

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the legs with triple-reeded "collars" marks another fashion, both in chairs and other furniture of this date, where single, double, or treble beads were used for the moulding of panels almost to the exclusion of any other mouldings. The seat rail of Fig. 356, painted with a Grecian "key pattern," suggests the growing fashion for the ultra-classical forms of ornamentation which, carried to the utmost limits, resulted finally in the depraved and artificial "English Empire" style of Hope, and to which Sheraton also descended in the last phase of his designing career. The same influence is also seen in the somewhat exceptional chair, Fig. 357, also of beech, and veneered with "tiger-stripings" of walnut and sycamore. The railing of the back and arms shows how the Chinese fashions of 1750–60 persisted, with some makers, until almost the close of the century, as this chair is almost, if not quite, contemporary with those previously illustrated in Figs. 355 and 356.

Fig. 358 is another of these lateral baluster chairs of beech, stained black and lined with gold, of simple shape and admirable proportion. The seats of all these chairs are made low to allow of a loose squab cushion being fitted, usually covered with damask or chintz and filled with white curled horse-hair.

Towards the very close of the eighteenth century chairs begin to be wider in the seat and more squat in the back, and were usually made in sets consisting of a settee, two elbow chairs, and from six to twelve small chairs. Fig. 359 is one of this type, and shows the usual kind of thin squab cushion of this period, "stitched up" on the edges. The framing here is of mahogany, inlaid with stars of sycamore and lines of holly. The top rail is carved with flutes "edge lined" with the same light wood. Fig. 360 is another mahogany chair of about 1800, inlaid in the same way. Figs. 361 and 362 are types of the late Sheraton settees or sofas, the first exhibiting many of the characteristics of previous models, the second upholstered on the back and arms, with a panelled and caned top rail above. The arm chairs to match Fig. 362 would be of the well-known "Bergère" type. Figs. 363 and 364 are specimens of the fashion for the reed and fluted decoration before referred to. Fig. 365 is a writing chair of the same period, with the fashionable lyre-splats in the back. The corner chair was an unusual form at this period, although the shape was probably well adapted to the purpose for which this chair was made.

With the last of this series of chairs, Fig. 366, we enter the nineteenth century and also into Sheraton's "Empire" period. The *Cabinet Dictionary*, which is the last of Sheraton's completed publications, is illustrated almost entirely in this style. It is to be regretted that such a fashion should have been powerful enough to have influenced the last of the great eighteenth century designers, and this "English Empire" chair has been given to show, by comparison with the models previously illustrated, how the level of English furniture designing falls from the highest to the lowest degree immediately after the close of the eighteenth century. The scope of the book has not been arbitrarily bounded by the conclusion of a century, but by the fact that after 1800 there is nothing in the later history of English furniture worthy of illustration or of emulation.

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Chapter XVII.

Gillows of Lancaster and London.*

THE necessity for devoting a considerable amount of space to the chronicles of the house of Gillow would not have been so urgent were it not necessary to enter into a mass of detail regarding the many inaccurate statements which have been made regarding the old firm. It is hardly fair to blame any person, or persons, in particular, for the genesis and propagation of these fables; it is, perhaps, with a house of business more than two centuries old, in the natural order of things that they should have arisen. The cause is possibly threefold. In the first place, there is always a tendency to invest an old business with a certain amount of oral romance, which insensibly grows when it is handed down through several generations; secondly, it is difficult to imagine a furniture maker of size, if not of repute, existing throughout the eighteenth century without reflecting some of the glories, if not coming into actual association with such famous craftsmen and designers as Chippendale, Adam, Hepplewhite, and others; thirdly, there is the inevitable desire of each writer on the subject of English furniture to break new ground. When marked predilections exist in certain directions, it is surprising on what meagre evidence "discoveries" are admitted and given a spurious life in print. Gillows offer a tempting field in this direction; from the year 1784, onwards, a series of roughly illustrated cost-books—"estimate sketches" as they are styled by members of the firm at the present day—have been kept, where the cost of every piece of note made by the Lancaster house, together with a rough measured illustration, have been carefully entered. These books have given rise to the first unfounded statement which has been accepted as fact by every writer who has dealt with the rise and growth of Gillows. A tradition exists that there was a complete series of these cost-books, covering practically the whole of the eighteenth century, formerly in existence, which were destroyed by a fire at the Lancaster factory of Gillows some years ago. This statement is not only unsupported by reliable evidence; it is doubtful in the extreme. Had the fire caused a gap in these books anywhere, the statement would have been credible, but there is none; they are continuous from 1784 onwards. It is comparatively easy to discern, from internal evidence, when a custom such as this keeping of cost-books originates; the first books are carefully compiled; they are over-elaborated, needlessly so, in fact. When they become an acknowledged fact, all redundancy of information and elaboration of detail is ruthlessly cut down. The new venture has lost its novelty, and has become a business necessity, on which

* Much of the subject matter of this chapter has already appeared in the form of articles in the *Burlington Magazine*.

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no more time is to be expended than is absolutely necessary. This is precisely what we do find in the cost-book of 1784, which sets a standard never reached by any later volume. Here each article of furniture is delineated so that the untechnical layman can easily recognise it; in the later books the sketches are very rough, only the salient features being briefly indicated, with the view to possible duplication at a later date.

It may, at first glance, appear to be somewhat captious to commence a history of a firm by pointing out the mistakes which have been made by other writers in dealing with the same subject, but there is such a tendency existing to accept all uncontroverted statements as facts, that it is necessary, to clear the way for what is historically reliable, to deal with these inaccuracies, and to dispose of them in this way, to remove all doubt that they are not actual discoveries known but to the few. Mr. R. S. Clouston is, perhaps, one of the chief offenders in this particular. In his book, *English Furniture and Furniture Makers of the Eighteenth Century*, he devotes fifteen pages to the history of Robert and Richard Gillow, a section which bears obvious signs of having been written round many of these traditions of the old Lancaster firm. He refers to the connection between Robert Adam and the Gillows in the following words: "*. . . when we remember that much of Robert Adam's later and more gorgeous work was executed by them.*" It would be instructive to examine the evidence for this statement. Gillows are credited with possessing original Adam designs, but the pieces of furniture which are supposed to have been made after these do not bear even a colourable resemblance to the style of the brothers. A pedestal sideboard, in particular, which is specifically referred to as being an Adam creation, has nothing of the famous architect anywhere in its design, unless swags of husks and pendant medallions were his exclusive copyright. I have carefully examined the names of Gillows' clients in the cost-books up to 1800—they are given in nearly every instance—and there is no mention of Adam himself or a single one of the clients referred to on his original drawings in the Soane Museum. So much for the connection of Robert Adam with the Gillows.

In the same book, page 262, Mr. Clouston refers to Hepplewhite having been apprenticed at the Lancaster factory of Gillows, and he appears to state this on the authority of the firm. It is a pity he did not require some documentary evidence of such an assertion; he would have found that none was forthcoming. Hepplewhite obtained his "freedom" in London, and must, therefore, have been apprenticed in the metropolis.

In spite of these fables, however, the authentic history of Gillows is interesting enough, in its way, and although it cannot be said that they exercised any influence on the furniture fashions of their time, they were honest craftsmen with a deservedly high reputation, and in their old cost-books many items of information are to be found by the diligent seeker, which are invaluable to the student of English furniture of the period.

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The firm has indisputably existed since the reign of William III., and certainly possesses many unique records. Robert Gillow, a joiner of Great Singleton, in the parish of Kirkham-in-the-Fylde, removed to Lancaster somewhere about the year 1695, and established the house of Gillow there. In 1728 he was made a freeman of Lancaster, a term which had quite another significance to that which it possesses at the present day. Trades were divided into guilds, which were exceedingly autocratic in their regulations, affecting both apprentices and masters. An apprentice, after he had served his time, could apply for his "freedom," without which he could not work as a journeyman. The latter term had also a real meaning at this date: an apprentice could not roam; he was tied to his master by indentures, the form of which, curiously enough, has hardly altered even to the present day. By the terms of these he undertook to serve his master diligently, to obey him in all lawful commands, not to frequent brothels, gaming-houses, or places of low entertainment. In some forms his duty was defined even as far as his religious belief and the particular observances relating thereto were concerned. The master, in his turn, undertook to house and feed the apprentice, to teach him his trade, and sometimes, although rarely, to pay him a small wage after some years. By an

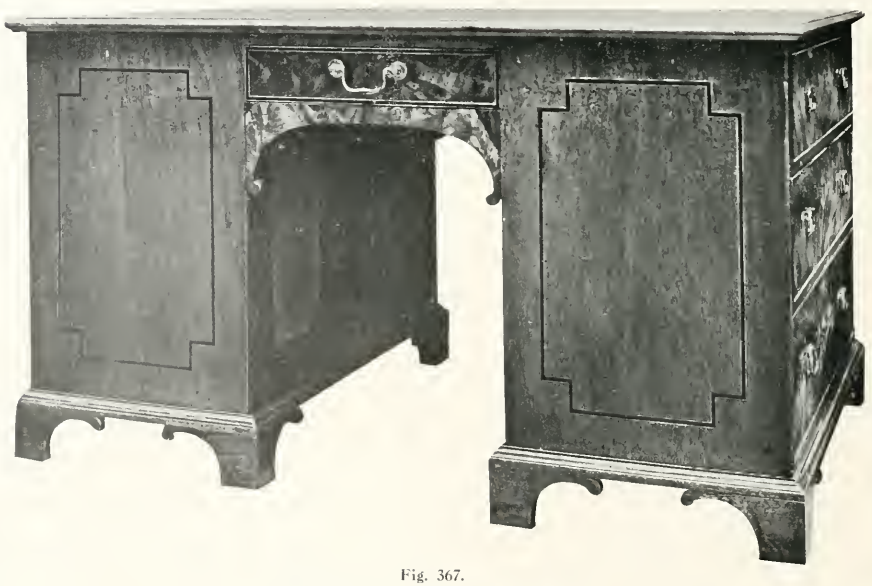

Fig. 367.

MAHOGANY WRITING TABLE.

4 ft. 5¼ ins. wide × 2 ft. 11 ins. deep · 2 ft. 7½ ins. high.

Date 1784.

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Act of Elizabeth, apprenticeship was obligatory on all who desired to follow a trade in England, and this law was not modified until the middle of the reign of George III., although the obligation still held with those mechanics who desired to enrol themselves with their trade guild.

When an apprentice had served his time he became "free of his master," and was admitted as a "journeyman," and could change his locality at will. If he followed a trade possessing a powerful guild, he was generally obliged, after a certain time, to make his "masterpiece," a specimen of work exhibiting his skill, which was examined by the officials of the guild; and if the verdict were satisfactory, he was adjudged to be "free of his company," and could commence business on his own account. He was now eligible to the freedom of his city, *i.e.* to become a burgess and to receive the franchise. If he became a "liveryman" of his company, he was entitled to wear the distinguishing livery of the guild, an honour much esteemed during the first half of the eighteenth century. In the records of the Clockmakers' Company, incorporated in 1631, are numerous instances of fines and even imprisonment inflicted on journeymen who had commenced business on their own account without first having obtained their "freedom."

Fig. 368.

MAHOGANY PEDESTAL TABLE.

4 ft. 0 ins. long × 2 ft. 8½ ins. deep × 2 ft. 8 ins. high.

Date 1784.

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Fig. 369.

MAHOGANY TABLE (enclosing library steps).

In the possession of Percival D. Griffiths, Esq.

3 ft. 2 ins. wide × 1 ft. 10 ins. deep × 2 ft. 8 ins. high.

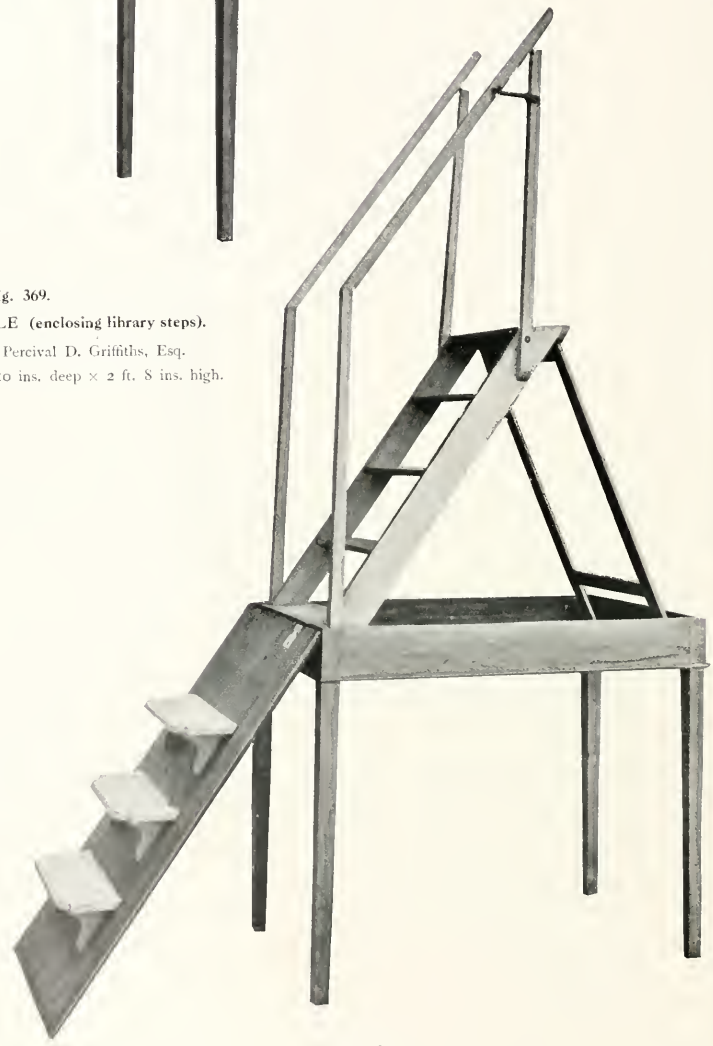

Fig. 370.

THE LIBRARY STEPS (of Fig. 369, shown open).

Total height, 7 ft. 3 ins.

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Robert Gillow appears to have combined the business of miscellaneous trader and licensed dealer in rum with that of a joiner. From the books of 1731 we can gather that he was little more than a jobbing carpenter. In 1746 are records of exporting ventures to the West Indies, furniture being traded for sugar, rum, and cotton. In 1737 he renders an account to "*Allen Harrison, Esq.*" for "*making rales in y^e^ Garding,*" and the value of his own time, for six days, is reckoned at 9s.—1s. 6d. per day. In 1745, we find from another entry that "Bohe" tea costs 6s. per lb.; green tea, 7s.; chocolate, 5s.; and loaf sugar, 10d.; whereas beef costs only 2d. per lb. Interpreted in terms of the purchasing power of money at this period, as established by the rate of 1s. 6d. for a day's work of an artisan, it will be seen that tea, chocolate, and sugar must have been prohibitively expensive luxuries for the working-classes at this period.

At the present day, when the rule in "society shops" is to pay by the hour, "piece-work" is regarded as a species of outlawry. During the latter part of the eighteenth century the opposite of this custom prevailed. All workshops of note paid their workmen "by the book," i.e. *The Cabinet-makers' London Book of Prices.* Four editions of this book were issued, in 1788, 1793, 1805, and 1825. A "job" was given out to the workman without any stipulated price, and he made up his cost piecemeal from the book. Elaborate tables, with innumerable additions and exceptions, were given in the volume, in which every minute detail of construction was specified and priced. This method penalised not only the slow, but also the non-studious workman. The quickest maker finished his "job" in the shortest time, and one

Fig. 371.

MAHOGANY DINING TABLE.

5 t. long, extending to 11 ft. 6 ins. × 2 ft. 6 ins. high × 2 ft. 9 ins. deep.

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imperfectly acquainted with his "book" made up his cost in the easiest manner, handing his sheet to the foreman for checking. It was impossible, in a work of this nature, that all the tables of prices should exactly agree where they overlapped, and, in fact, they varied considerably. The man who knew his "book"—in the workshop parlance—always selected the tables of prices most advantageous to himself, and if he proved exceptionally expert, he could readily secure a situation as a foreman.

Gillows do not appear to have ever been a "book" shop during the eighteenth century, and this is all the more valuable for our purpose, in enabling a correct estimate of prices and value of money at the different periods to be ascertained. "Jobbing shops" were obviously outside the scope of the "price book."

The "famine years" of 1799 to 1803 had the effect of raising the rate of wages paid by Gillows to their workmen; whether they affected the prices in the "book" it is not possible to state with any certainty; the edition of 1805 shows an advance in this direction, but this was by way of locking the stable door after the horse was gone. Probably

Fig. 372.
MAHOGANY DINING TABLE.
4 ft. 6 ins. long · 2 ft. 11 ins. deep × 2 ft. 6 ins. high.

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the brunt of the hard times fell on the workmen, as in the case of the "seventies," which many cabinet-makers of the present day can remember.

In the cost-book of 1784 occurs the entry :—

Mr. Dowbiggin's time preparing and gilding, 5 days, 7 hours . .	16	6
2 books, 5 leaves of gold, and size	3	8
Glass for oval frame, 10 ins. × 8 ins.	2	6

This Mr. Dowbiggin was the founder of the celebrated Mount Street firm now known as Holland & Son. He figures in several of the books, and in the same capacity as a gilder. The wages of gilders appear to have been nearly twice as high as those of cabinet-makers at this period, as is shown by comparison of several entries. Two shillings and sixpence of that date, equivalent to about eight shillings of our present-day money, for little more than half a square foot of glass, shows that the former extortionate prices were still maintained. It is little wonder that in the framing of what are now rare prints, margins were ruthlessly sacrificed. The covering glass must have been more valuable than the print it was designed to protect, in the greater majority of instances.

In 1784 mahogany must have been comparatively cheap. Thus on 28th January of this year occurs the entry :—

"1 *piece of Mahogany, 4 ft. square (? 4 square feet) inch stuff at 2d. (? per foot).*"

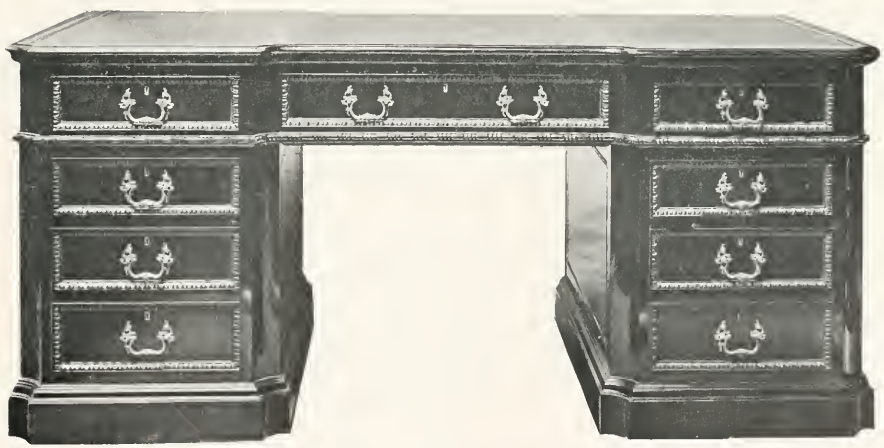

Fig. 373.

MAHOGANY PEDESTAL WRITING TABLE.

5 ft. 3 ins. wide · 2 ft. 10½ ins. deep × 2 ft. 5¾ ins. high.

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This evidently refers to plain wood, as in the same year $\frac{3}{8}$ in. mahogany of fine figure is charged at 5d. per foot. Deals are reckoned at 1 in., 2d. per foot; $1\frac{1}{2}$ in., 3d. per foot; $2\frac{1}{2}$ in., 5d. per foot; $\frac{5}{8}$ in., $1\frac{1}{2}$ in., and $\frac{1}{2}$ in., at $1\frac{1}{4}$d. It must be pointed out that the term "deals" probably refers to what is now known as "first quality pine."

In another entry in the same book, 8 hours' work is charged at 1s. 8d., or at the rate of $2\frac{1}{2}$d. per hour. On a later page, 15 days' labour is charged at £1, 6s. 3d., or 1s. 9d. per day of $10\frac{1}{2}$ hours. The average of other entries in this year appears to establish this $10\frac{1}{2}$-hour day as the rule, although working days of 12 hours are not uncommon; the extra hour and a half may have been regarded as overtime. Towards the end of 1784 the rate appears to have been fixed at 2d. per hour, or 2s. per day of 12 hours, from 7 A.M. to 9 P.M., two hours being allowed for breakfast, dinner, and tea—or rather what corresponded to that meal at the time, as few workmen would have cared to squander three days' labour on a pound of "Bohe."

Fig. 374.
MAHOGANY CHINA CASE.
7 ft. 2 ins. high · 2 ft. 5 ins. wide · 1 ft. 6 ins. deep.

From an entry in Kent's *Directory* of 1784 it appears that two firms of the name of Gillow existed in Lancaster at this date—Richard Gillow & Son in Dam Street, and Richard and Robert Gillow on Castle Hill. In Bailey's *British Directory* of the same year the London firm is given as Robert Gillow & Co., "upholders," 176 Oxford Street (old numbering). These directories were very insignificant octavo volumes, woefully incomplete, and to those who attach any value to them as records it is interesting to compare Kent's and Bailey's Directories for 1784, where in the first is given the names of *Chippendale and "Hage," of 60 St. Martin's Lane, Cabinet-makers*, and in the second *Chippendale and "Haigh," Upholders and Cabinet-makers*, of the same address.

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In every one of these entries it will be noticed that nothing is reckoned for what we know, at the present day, as polishing. Occasionally, as in "4 *round knife cases for Mr. Benison*," the item of "*varnishing*, 3s.," appears, but even this is not general, and much of the mahogany furniture of that date must have been merely oiled, and left for the subsequent attentions of domestics, in the way of waxing and friction. Much of the so-called "patina," so prized by collectors and expatiated upon at such length by many writers on the subject of English furniture, is really the surface of shellac polish, or "French" polishing, which dates from the middle of the nineteenth century, and was probably an introduction from Paris.

There is a strong tendency exhibited throughout these old cost-books to follow the prevailing London fashions at a respectful distance of from twenty to thirty years. Occasionally an illustration is marked "*Gillows, London; For Sale*," and the presumption is that the London house furnished the design, as these pieces appear to be more up-to-date—to use the modern phrase—than the general run of those made for provincial clients.

Fig. 375.
MAHOGANY SECRETAIRE CHEST OF DRAWERS.
5 ft. 11 ins. high × 3 ft. 6 ins. wide × 1 ft. 9 ins. deep.

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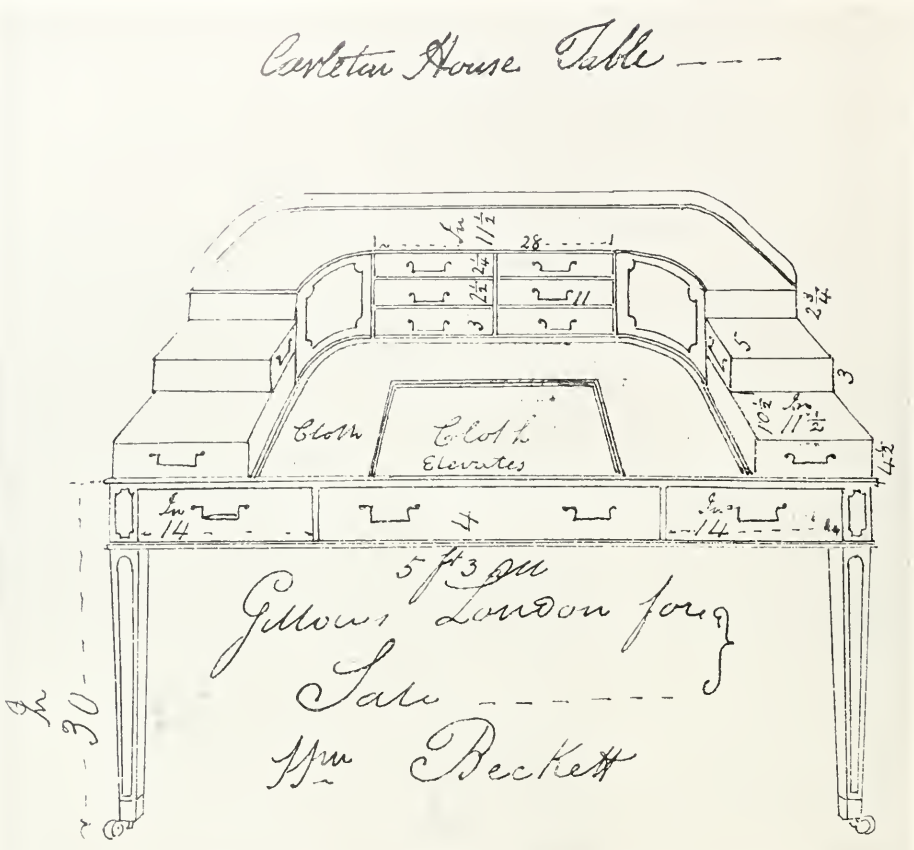

"A mahogany writing Table ven[d] Back and front ven[d] all over. The top and flat part of steps banded with satinwood and double strung round. Edge of tops, upright part of steps, partitions of all the small drawers and doors banded with rosewood and white strings. The outer and inner ends of steps banded with rosewood and white strings, say cast and in two pannels, large drawer banded with rosewood white strings; the back banded and white strings in 3 square pannels and 3 hollow cornered ones within Do top end of legs 6 hollow cornered pannels and 16 square Do round at top ends a band of satinwood round the cloth and round the elevating flap which is banded with rosewood and double strung an astragal on bottom of rail and on the legs which project no bands or strings on the rail all plain drawers and unpl[d]."

Fig. 376.

THE "CARLETON HOUSE TABLE."

From the Gillow Cost-Book of 1796.

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A MAHOGANY WRITING TABLE

1796.	*s.*	*d.*	£	*s.*	*d.*
June 7.—25 feet of $\frac{5}{8}$ mahogany fine veind ven^{r} satin and rose-wood bands and strings	2	6	3	2	6
2 ft. of 1″ mahogany birching ven^{r} on one side and plain ven^{r} on the other. bands and strings	3	–		6	–
5 ft of 1″ mahogany and ven^{r}. bands and strings	2	6		12	6
5 ft. of 2″ Deal and mahogany ven^{r}	1	6		7	6
$4\frac{1}{2}$ ft. of 1″ mahogany in the legs and strings	1	4		6	–
20 ft. of $\frac{1}{4}$ mahogany		4		6	8
18 ft. of $\frac{1}{2}$ mahogany		6		9	–
20 ft. of 1″ mahogany		10		16	8
20 ft. of $\frac{1}{2}$ Oak		3		5	–
12 ft. of $\frac{3}{4}$ Oak		4		4	–
9 ft. of $\frac{3}{4}$ Deal		2		1	6
7 ft. of green Cloth		10		5	10
6 large square handles		9		4	6
6 smaller Do do		$5\frac{1}{2}$		2	9
15 Locks and ivory escutcheons				19	–
2 pair of $1\frac{1}{2}$ hinges		$4\frac{1}{2}$			9
2 pair of 1″ Do					$4\frac{1}{2}$
4 $1\frac{1}{4}$ Casters				5	2
Incidents, &c. &c.				12	–
Making by William Beckett. Time as in petty ledger			8	1	–
Prime			£17	8	8

The Cost of the "Carleton House" Writing Table (Fig. 376) as made by Gillows in 1796. From the Cost-Book of that Year.

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In the usual way, the Gillow furniture of the eighteenth century appears to have a peculiar facility for just "missing the mark" in the way of design. Where the influence of Chippendale, and especially Robert Adam, is seen in their patterns, there is always some incongruity which stamps the piece as "Gillow" and not Chippendale or Adam. This is, in itself, strong evidence that the tradition of the work executed for the latter is a myth. Gillows appear to have relied on carefully chosen woods and general excellence of workmanship rather than on originality of design for the further cultivation of their clientele.

Figs. 367 and 368 are pedestal tables which illustrate the "Gillow handwriting" of this period very well. In the first the fine curl veneer used for the centre drawer front and for those on the side as contrasted with the plain wood of the pedestals, the drawers pulling out from the end instead of the fronts, and the panelling of the internal

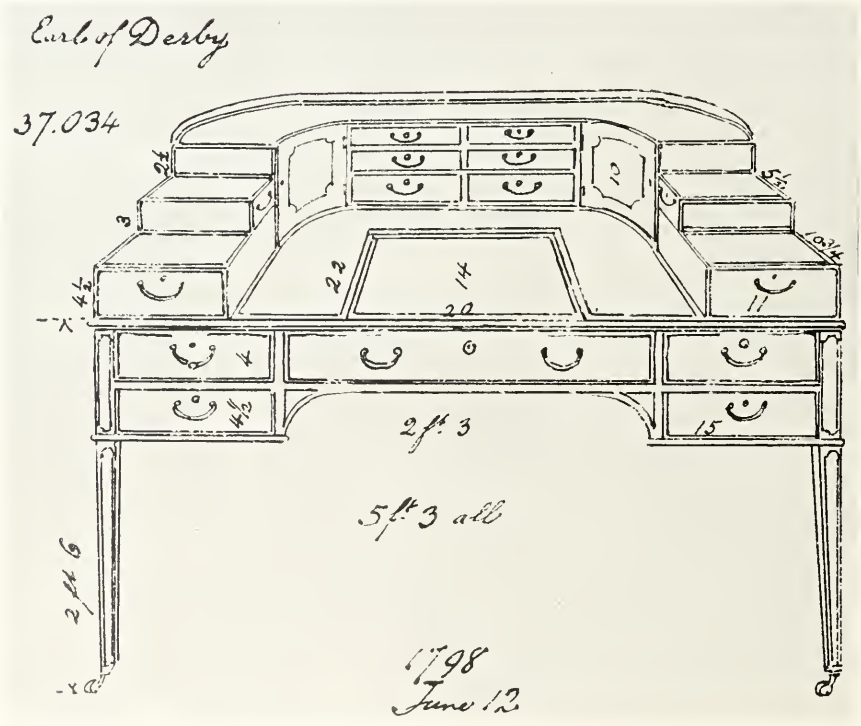

Fig. 377.
THE "CARLETON HOUSE" TABLE.
Made by Gillows for the Earl of Derby in 1798.

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ends are all unusual features at this date. In Fig. 368 the clumsy detail of the top, the quarter-columns at the corners—evidently an inspiration borrowed from the later "grandfather cases"—the bottom drawers with the plinth moulding opening with them, and the central cupboard, are all precisely what one would have expected from a provincial maker. The illustrations which correspond to these photographs are dated 1784, which is about twenty years later than one would have expected with a London-made piece.

The custom with Gillows at this period appears to have been to duplicate patterns, the same design figuring on many occasions in the one book. Thus some half-dozen library steps are illustrated, usually enclosed in stools or tables, as shown in Figs. 369 and 370. In these and the succeeding photographic illustrations, the pieces they represent are not actual Gillow examples, but correspond, almost exactly, with certain of the rough illustrations in these old cost-books. The first entry of enclosed library

Fig. 378.

MAHOGANY WRITING TABLE ("Carleton House" pattern).

4 ft. 6 ins. long × 2 ft. 7 ins. deep × 3 ft. 4 ins. high.

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steps of this class occurs in November 1785, and the prime cost is given as £1, 2s. 9d. The custom of concealing the real purpose of a certain article of furniture by either enclosing it, or allowing it to masquerade as another, was a fairly general one at this period. Thus beds enclosed in bureaux, night-stools in chests of drawers, enclosed wash-stands and dressing-tables, "harlequin" tables and the like, suggest that the bedchamber was still, as formerly, used as a species of informal reception-room.

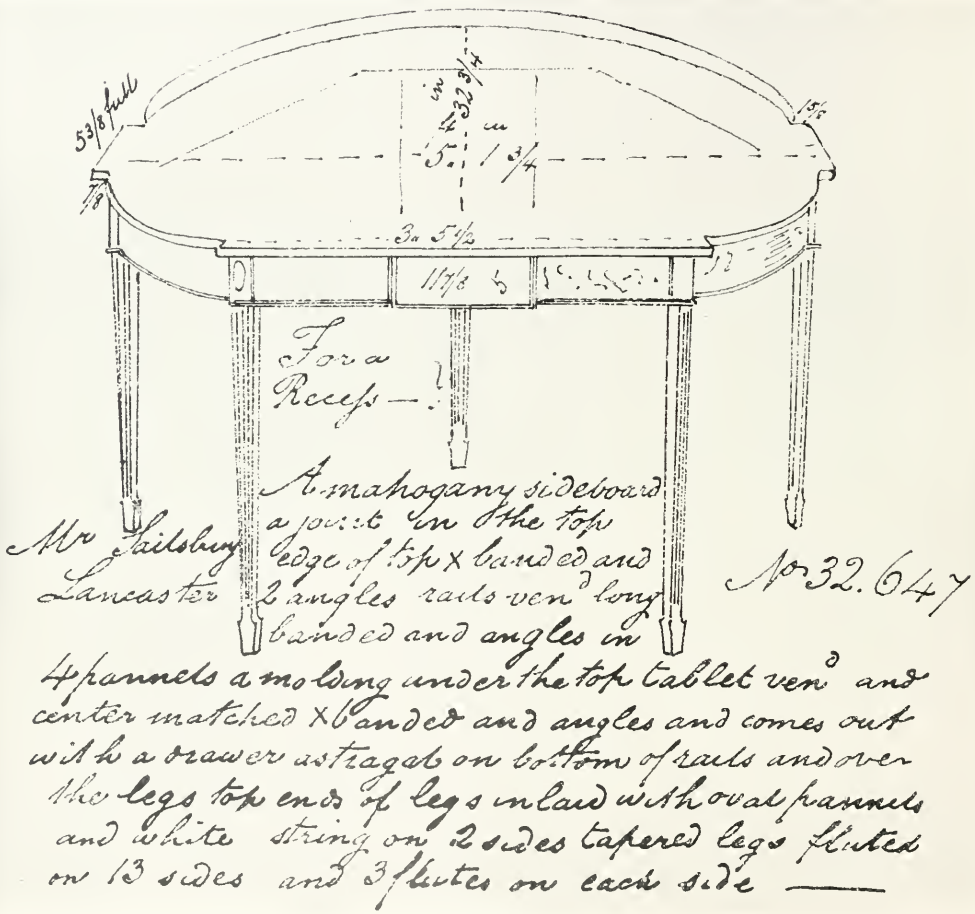
For a Recess —
A mahogany sideboard a joint in the top edge of top x banded and 2 angles rails ven^d long banded and angles in
Mr Sailsbury Lancaster
No 32.647
4 pannels a moldng under the top tablet ven^d and center matched x banded and angles and comes out with a drawer astragal on bottom of rails and over the legs top ends of legs inlaid with oval pannels and white string on 2 sides tapered legs fluted on 13 sides and 3 flutes on each side

Fig. 379.

A MAHOGANY SIDEBOARD. ("For a recess.")

From the Gillow Cost-Book of 1796.

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Gillows made a considerable number of dining-tables, varying from 8 ft. to 24 ft. in length, in the years from 1780 to 1800, and these are always amplifications of the one pattern—the composite pembroke type as illustrated in Figs. 371 and 372. As a variant, the central portions were frequently made on tripod stands instead of four legs, for the greater convenience of the diners, who could thus easily put their feet under the mahogany. The tops of tables of this class were fitted with brass sockets and clips so that they could be readily attached and detached. These clips can be seen in Fig. 371.

Many of the terms employed in Lancaster at this period sound very quaint at the present day. Thus a tambour table is a "*pull-over reed-top table*"; corner chairs are known as "*smoking chairs*"; a wine cooler is a "*guardavine*" (? garde-du-vin); corner cabinets for china are "*Boofets*"; wheel bath-chairs are "*gouty chairs*" (gout was a very fashionable complaint in the eighteenth century, and a sure indication of pedigree, as witness Hogarth's pictures and engravings); small circular-top tripod tables with tilt-up tops are described as "*snap-tables*" (on account of the small spring catches which held the tops firmly when they were "snapped" down); and reeded legs are "*cabled*." A small square occasional table with a book-carrier is known as a "*sheveret*."

In 1788 the time of cabinet-makers appears to have been reckoned at 3d. per hour for a twelve-hour day. In assessing the number of working hours in a week it must be borne in mind that Saturday was almost a full working day until about 1845; and even as late as 1870 it was quite usual for workshops not to close on this day until five or even six o'clock. The present-day custom of leaving at one o'clock did not come into general use until about 1892, even in London shops.

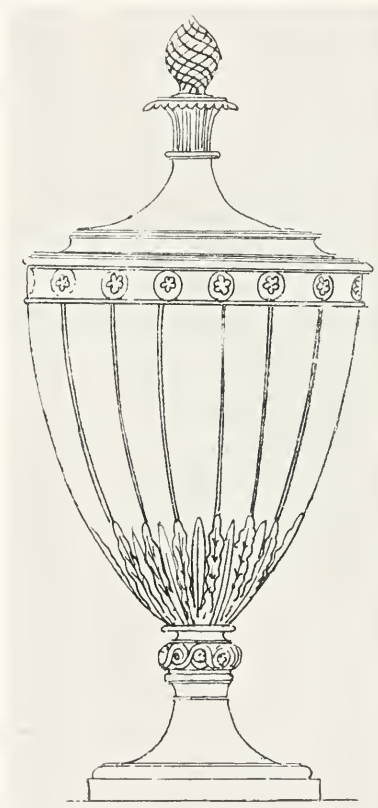

Fig. 380.

A "VAUSE KNIFE-CASE."

From an entry in the Gillow Cost-Book of September 1796.

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The establishment of the London house of Gillow appears to date from about 1760, although there is some evidence which points to a date nearly twenty years before. The firm of "*Gillow and Barton, in Thames Street, near the Custom House*," figures in directories about the former period, although the London premises were probably warehouses rather than showrooms, designed to receive furniture sent by sea from Lancaster. This "braving of the elements by sea and land" is probably the cause of the expression "*Adventure to London*," which figures in the books at this date, although, when we consider the state of the metropolis at this period and the slowness and difficulty of transport to and from the provinces, the new undertaking may reasonably have been an "adventure" in more than name.

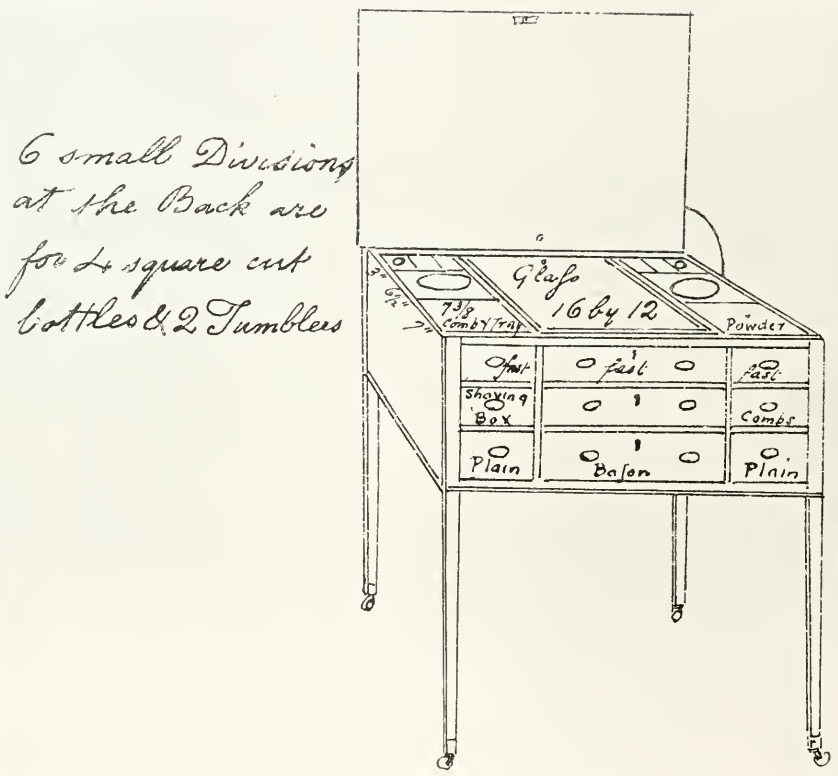

Fig. 381.
MAHOGANY ENCLOSED DRESSING TABLE.
From the Gillow Cost-Book of 1796.

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In 1765 the firm acquired the lease of certain land on the north side of Oxford Street, close to the present Marble Arch, at that time the terminus of Tyburn Lane, and famous as the place of exit of many a notorious malefactor. Marylebone was a village on the outskirts of London at this date, bounded on the south by the Tyburn Road —the present-day Oxford Street. From Newgate along the Tyburn Road to the fatal tree, many a notorious felon must have passed the windows of Gillows' new premises on his last journey.

The date of the "Adventure to London" coincides with the period when Chippendale was at the zenith of his fame, Hepplewhite slowly making his way to the front with the more effeminate style which bears his name, and a few years after Robert Adam had returned from Italy to dominate the furniture fashions of his time until his death in 1792. Gillows do not appear, however, to have followed the tide, but this is probably due to

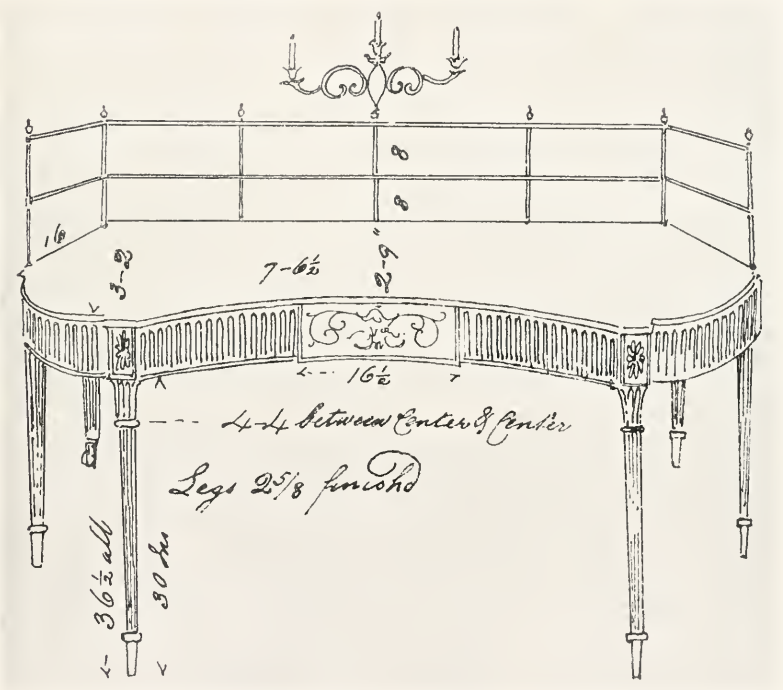

Fig. 382.
MAHOGANY SIDEBOARD.
Made by Gillows for "Robert Peel of Drayton Manor" in 1797.

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the factories being still at Lancaster, and the fountain-head being little affected by events of a city which at that date was relatively as far removed as are the Dardanelles at the present day. Occasionally the influence of the London house is seen in entries in the cost-books marked as "*For London, for sale*," but these are exceptional.

The pedestal table, Fig. 373, is unusual, as in the constant repetition of patterns, pieces of this type were rarely made. The influence of Chippendale is noticeable in the hollow corners, the carving of the drawer mouldings, and the handles. Figs. 374 and 375 are further examples of sturdy designing and sound construction, although somewhat provincial in the sections of mouldings and the shapings of the bracket feet.

Figs. 376 and 377 are two variations of the well-known Carlton House table, made

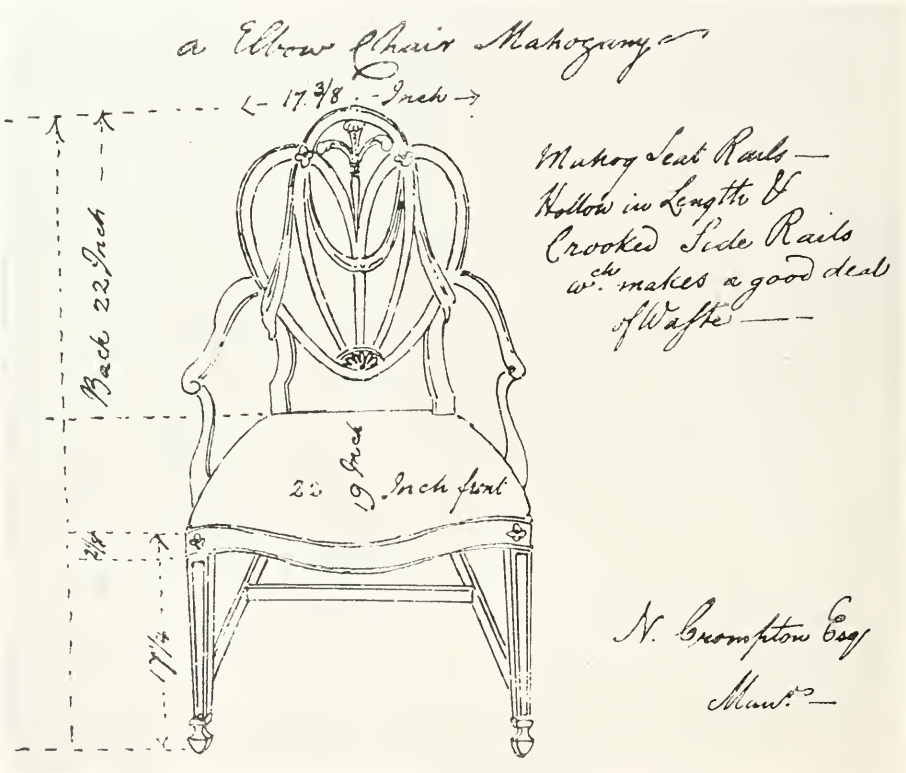

Fig. 383.
MAHOGANY ARM CHAIR.
From the Gillow Cost-Book of 1797.

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by Gillows in 1796 and 1798, the latter for the Earl of Derby at Knowsley. The two records are interesting, as this table is usually regarded as exclusively the creation of Thomas Sheraton, and to have been especially designed by him for Carlton House, when that residence was redecorated and refurnished under the superintendence of Henry Holland. How this legend arose, and the reason for the name—which appears to have been a well-known one in 1796—it is useless to speculate. Sheraton illustrates a table of this type in the "Appendix" to the *Drawing Book* of 1793,* but there is no reason, either by the superscription to the plate itself or the description in the front, to connect it with Carlton House. Had the table been designed for the Regent, and by Sheraton, there is no doubt that the fact would have received ample mention in the *Drawing Book*. There are also certain reasons for believing that the design was well known in its various editions—as there are some five or six versions of the pattern—even in 1793, and Sheraton merely borrowed it, as he did in many other instances, and improved on the general lines by substituting the well-known hollow flaps in front for the stepped terrace shown in the Gillow example. Fig. 378 is the Carlton table as illustrated in the *Cabinet Dictionary* of 1802-3, and in other of the design books of the period.

Fig. 384.
MAHOGANY ARM CHAIR.
Another edition of Fig. 383.

From the Gillows' custom of following the London fashions at a distance of from ten to twenty years—a fact which is abundantly manifested in the pages of these old cost-books—we are justified in assuming that the Carlton House table was no novelty in 1796, since it had already acquired a recognised trade name. Fig. 376 is indicated as for "Gillows, London, for Sale," and it is the first of its kind which is illustrated. The design was, therefore, probably supplied by the London house, and may have been the creation of Hepplewhite; certainly Sheraton is out of the question. The design was well known from 1795 to 1800, as several variations are given in design books published about this date. The cost of the 1796 table is shown under the illustration.†

* Already illustrated in Fig. 255.

† Compared with the extracts from the cost-books of former years, the enormous increase in the cost of both wood and labour in this entry is very significant. It is, of course, obvious that the purchasing value of money—the only really reliable criterion for comparison—had diminished in nearly a corresponding degree. Mahogany had more than doubled

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Fig. 385.
ARM CHAIR IN BLACK LACQUER.
Made by Gillows in 1798.

Fig. 379 is a representative specimen of a sideboard or side table, many of which were made by Gillows, possessing the same peculiarity —the rounded back as shown in the illustration. The sketch is marked "*For a recess*," and from the number of these tables we can infer that a recess in the form of an apse was a usual feature in dining-rooms of this period. As the particular one for which this table was intended must have measured five feet six inches in width, it must have been specifically designed for a side table. The circular-headed apse was a favourite detail with Robert Adam, which he used with great effect in the designs which he made for Gawthorp—now Harewood House.

Fig. 380 is a "*Vause Knife-case*," from an entry of September 1796; a close approximation to the manner of Hepplewhite. The prime cost is given as £4, 12s. 5½d.—Gillows did not despise the humble "bawbee" in their calculations—the making costs £1, 7s., the carving 18s., and "*varnish and varnishing*" 1s. So much for the "polishing" at this date. The entry has a significant footnote, added in 1800, to the effect that the price is advanced by £1, 1s. 3d. From 1799 to 1803 were the historical "Famine Years," when the unskilled labouring and the agricultural classes starved in the highways of wealthy England. This advance of 50 per cent. in the cost of making —it can be nothing else—is a highly significant indication of the labour market, and the cost of living, at this period.

and labour nearly trebled in price, in the years from 1785 to 1796. The standard of comfort of the working classes had not really risen with this apparent appreciation of wages; Thorold Rogers has estimated that the usual provisions of the labouring classes had increased by more than 125 per cent. between 1792 and 1795. House and land rents had risen in the same period in even greater degree. During the period when England was practically a self-supporting country as far as the common necessities of life were concerned, the rate of wages of the working classes touched the starvation level nearer than ever before or since. Wages had increased, but by no means in the same ratio as the cost of the means of subsistence; had they remained stationary, the artisans would have starved as they worked. The time of the William Beckett in the above entry is reckoned at 5½d. per hour, a rise of nearly 130 per cent. as compared with the wages of only fifteen years previously. An idea of the value of the present-day perfection in tools, and the value of labour-saving machinery such as the circular saw and the moulding machine, may be gathered from the fact that the making of this table occupied William Beckett for the space of 351 working hours, or more than double the time which would be allowed in a first-class shop at the present day. It will also be remarked that no entry is made for polishing. The usual process was to merely oil the wood and then to rub in beeswax, turpentine, and powdered resin. This would be done by the cabinet-maker, and on such a table as this not more than two hours would be allowed for the operation.

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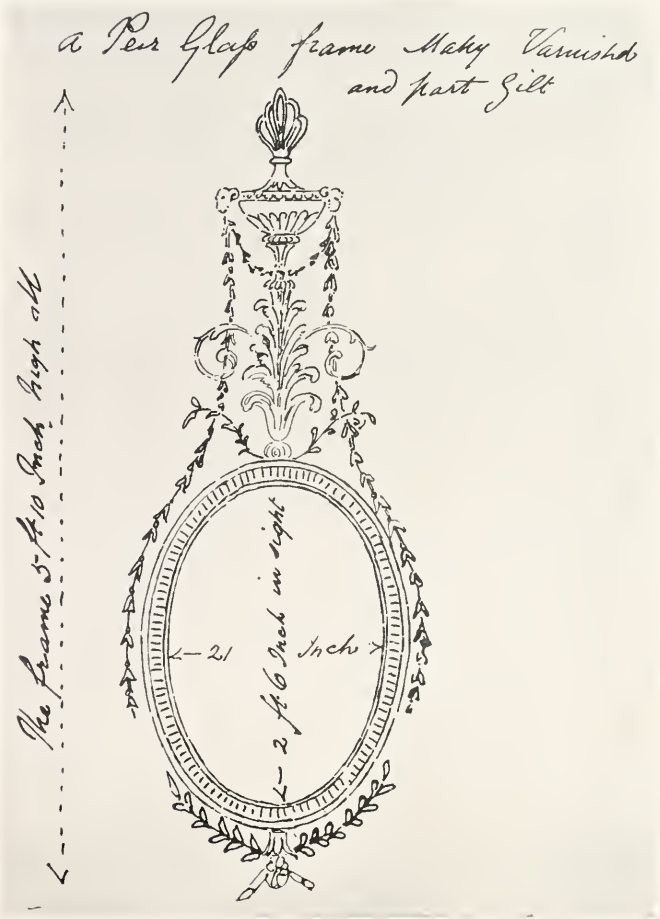

Fig. 386.

MAHOGANY AND GILT MIRROR.

From the Gillow Cost-Book of 1788.

August 6th, 1788. *A Peir Glass frame Mah^y.*

	£	s.	d.
6½ ft. 1 Inch Mah^y @ 1s. p. ft.		6	6
1 ft. ½ Inch Mah^y @ 6d. p. ft.			6
2 ft. 1 Inch Deal to Do. @ 2d. p. ft.			4
5½ ft. ⅜ Inch Deal the Back @ 1d. p. ft.			5½
Iron Wire to Do.			4
4 Brass Holdfasts and Screws			4
Turning and Glewing up the Frame		6	6
Carveing the frame	1	13	6
Gilding and Varnishing Do, J. Dowbiggin, 8s.; Gold and Size, 3s.		11	0
Glew and Incidents		1	0
Looking Glass, 2 ft. 7 Inches by 22 Inches	2	18	0
	5	18	5½

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Compared with the elaborate toilet-tables in use at the present day, the small enclosed dressing-table illustrated in Fig. 381 appears to be a very primitive article of furniture, and yet this was the only type in use until after the close of the eighteenth century. The note on the left-hand side of the sketch suggests that these fitted dressing-tables acted as receptacles for strong waters in the bedroom. In a hard-drinking age, such as the later Georgian era, it is not surprising to find dressing-tables fitted also as spirit cabinets. In the cost of this table, four square bottles, two decanters, and two tumblers are reckoned at a total cost of 11s. 4d. The silvered glass of the mirror, 16 ins. by 12 ins., is priced at 9s., which shows that the former prohibitive prices of glass were still maintained.

The mahogany sideboard, Fig. 382, indicates the influence of both Adam and Hepplewhite. The entry bears the date September 19, 1797, and is not the less interesting by reason of having been made for Robert Peel of Drayton Manor. The prime cost is given as £10, 13s. 10¼d., the making being reckoned at £1, 17s. 3d., the carving at £2, 2s., and the varnishing at 5s.

These cost-books show a considerable improvement, on the part of Gillows, in the designing of chairs, towards the last years of the eighteenth century. Fig. 383 is the sketch of a typical Hepplewhite chair, better illustrated in Fig. 384. The seat is indicated as being covered in hair-cloth, and the cost is given as £1, 15s. 6¼d. The quaint note on the right-hand side of the sketch is worthy of note.

Fig. 385 is an actual Gillow chair, the frame of beech, painted and lacquered in the Anglo-Chinese manner of the later Hepplewhite period. It will be noticed that there is very little, if anything, of the provincial "touch" remaining in their designs in the last decade.

Fig. 386 of this series is a "*Peir glass frame*" which is very much in the style of Adam. The mysteries of the art of composition ornament, however, do not appear to have penetrated as far as Lancaster, although the pendant husks, carved from mahogany, were evidently wired from behind, the item of "*Iron wire, 4d.*," figuring in the cost. The price of the glass is also worthy of notice. Robert Adam, with his taste for the severely classical, especially in matters of wall decoration, would have been the last to have consented to a mirror frame of this kind being made from mahogany "*varnished and part gilt.*"

The foregoing illustrations have been sufficient to indicate that Gillows occupied a worthy place in the history of English furniture of the eighteenth century. They founded no style, and were, perhaps, quite satisfied to occupy a niche in the temple of fame considerably removed from its pinnacle. They were purely commercial, although influenced to a marked degree by considerations of workmanship, but all was

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fish which came to their net. Mangles, coffins, bird-cages and the like, figure very prominently in the pages of these cost-books. The pathetic note, even, is not entirely absent. William Beckett makes a grand coffin of oak, with furniture of gorgeous brass, for some Lancastrian notable, and before the year is past we find a small diagram, with a cost of 4s. 2d., for a "*Deal coffin, stained black, for William Beckett's Child.*"

The general impression one gathers from these old books, the chronicles of the Gillows' factory for half a century, is one of sturdy honesty, good craftsmanship, and a keen appreciation of the decorative value of well selected and finely figured timber. Perhaps this is the surest foundation on which to erect a business reputation which shall survive the vicissitudes of more than two centuries.

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Chapter XVIII.

Original and Modern Polishes.

IT is necessary for a proper understanding of what is commonly known as "original polishes" or "patina" to describe in detail the various processes which English furniture has undergone during the last three centuries.

All polishes have primarily a double object, to enhance the appearance of the wood, and to act as a preservative against the ravages of worm, dust, dirt and the like.

The earliest polishing known consisted in well oiling the wood with nut or poppy oil, which was sometimes dyed by the immersion of alkanet root in the oil for some days before using. When this had thoroughly permeated the grain of the wood, and had hardened somewhat by exposure to the air, beeswax dissolved in turpentine—to the consistency of a thick paste—was rubbed into the pores and polished by repeated friction with a brush. After each operation, lasting some hours, the piece was allowed to stand for a day for the turpentine to evaporate and the wax to harden, when the process was repeated at intervals, frequently extending over many years, as there is no doubt that furniture—especially Tudor and early Stuart oak—was periodically renovated in this way. To this long-continued friction with turpentine and wax is due the beautiful colour—resembling fine old bronze—and glossy surface, of much of the best examples of Elizabethan oak furniture in many of the historical mansions of England.

When walnut superseded oak in popular favour, the time of the working and manufacturing classes began to have a greater commercial value, and the original process of waxing was evidently found too tedious and expensive. The method then adopted was to varnish the wood with a brush—copal varnish being usually employed.* It was probably noticed that previous oiling of the wood had the effect of darkening its colour, and causing the varnish to crack or blister, as no friction and consequent amalgamation of the surface polish with the underlying oil was possible, and this oiling was therefore dispensed with. After two or three coats of varnish had been applied—each being allowed to become thoroughly hard before the next was brushed on—the finishing of the surface was effected with beeswax and turpentine in the same fashion as before. This previous varnishing of the wood had the effect of considerably shortening the process of polishing, but it was open to several grave objections. Writers on this subject have

* See Vol. I. p. 166.

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frequently commented on the liability of walnut to the attacks of worms, a liability shared equally by birch, beech, sycamore, chestnut, pear or lime tree, but no one appears to have noticed that these woods in their natural state are seldom affected in this way. The supposition that the worms are attracted by the resinous varnish is therefore exceedingly strong, especially when it is remembered that Tudor oak is comparatively free from this kind of ravage, *unless it has been varnished.*

Throughout the whole of the eighteenth century, the method of polishing described above persists. The modern method of so-called French-polishing, which will be described in detail later on, could not have been known until about 1820 or 1830, as the " English Empire " furniture of about that date is the earliest which can be definitely described as having been originally French-polished ; all of the earlier mahogany, where so treated, having been done at a subsequent period to its manufacture. The method of differentiating between the original and subsequent polishing will be apparent when the process is described later on. Before leaving the subject of eighteenth century polishes, it will be instructive to give Thomas Sheraton's description in the article under that heading from his *Cabinet Dictionary* of 1803 :—

" POLISH :—Is to give brightness to any substance. The method of polishing amongst cabinet-makers is various, as required in different pieces of work. Sometimes they polish with beeswax and a cork for inside work, where it would be improper to use oil. The cork is rubbed hard on the wax to spread it over the wood, and then they take fine brick-dust and sift it through a stocking on the wood, and with a cloth the dust is rubbed till it clears away all the clemmings which the wax leaves on the surface.

" At other times they polish with soft wax, which is a mixture of turpentine and beeswax, which renders it soft and facilitates the work of polishing. Into this mixture a little red oil may occasionally be put, to help the colour of the wood. This kind of polishing requires no brick-dust, for the mixture being soft, a cloth of itself will be sufficient to rub it off with. The general mode of polishing plain cabinet-work is, however, with brick-dust and oil, in which case the oil is either plain linseed or stained with alkanet root (see ALKANET ROOT). If the wood be hard, the oil should be left standing upon it for a week ; but if soft, it may be polished in two days. The brick-dust and oil should then be rubbed together, which in a little time will become a putty under the rubbing cloth, in which state it should be kept under the cloth as much as possible, for this kind of putty will infallibly secure a fine polish by continued rubbing ; and the polisher should by all means avoid the application of fresh brick-dust, by which the unskilful hand will frequently ruin his work instead of improving it ; and to prevent the necessity of supplying himself with fresh brick-dust he ought to lay on a great quantity at first, carefully sifted through a gauze stocking ; and he should notice if the oil be too dry on the surface of the work before he begin, for in this case it should be

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re-oiled, that it may compose a sufficient quantity of the polishing substance, which should never be altered after the polishing is commenced, and which ought to continue till the wood by repeated friction become warm, at which time it will finish in a bright polish, and is finally to be cleared off with the bran of wheaten flour.

"Chairs are generally polished with a hardish composition of wax rubbed upon a polishing brush, with which the grain of the wood is impregnated with the composition, and afterwards well rubbed off without any dust or bran. The composition I recommend is as follows :—Take beeswax and a small quantity of turpentine in a clear earthenware pan and set it over the fire until the wax unites with the turpentine, which it will do by constant stirring about ; add to this a little red lead finely ground upon a stone, together with a small portion of fine Oxford ochre, to bring the whole to the colour of brisk mahogany. Lastly, when you take it off the fire, add a little copal varnish to it and mix it well together, then turn the whole into a basin of water, and while it is yet warm, work it into a ball, with which the brush is to be rubbed as before observed. And observe, with a ball of wax and brush kept for this purpose entirely, furniture in general may be kept in good order."

The article on alkanet root, from the same source, is given to supplement the above :—

"ALKANET :—A species of Anchusa, as I suppose, the root of which is much in use amongst cabinet-makers for making red oil, the best composition for which, as far as I know, is as follows :—Take a quart of good linseed oil, to which put a quarter of a pound of alkanet root, as much opened with the hand as possible, that the bark of the root which tinges the oil may fly off ; to this put about an ounce of dragon's blood and another of rose pink, finely powdered in a mortar ; set the whole within a moderate heat for twelve hours at least, or better if a day and a night. Then strain it through a flannel into a bottle for use. This staining oil is not properly applicable to every sort of mahogany. The open-grained honduras ought first to be polished with wax and turpentine only ; but if it be tolerably close-grained and hard and wants briskness of colour, the above oil will help it much. All hard mahogany of a bad colour should be oiled with it, and should stand unpolished a time, proportioned to its quality and texture of grain. If it be laid on hard wood to be polished off immediately, it is of little use ; but if it stand a few days after, the oil penetrates the grain and hardens on the surface, and consequently will bear a better polish, and look brighter in colour."

From about the same date as the introduction of French-polishing, occurs the method of staining mahogany with a solution of bichromate of potash dissolved in water. This not only darkens but also reddens the colour of the wood. Original eighteenth century mahogany varies from a golden to a golden-brown shade : *it is never red.* Pieces of this hue, where the colour is not due to the overlying polish, have always been subsequently scraped, stained, and repolished. The modern method is unequalled for

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producing a rich colour and brilliant surface—that is when the French-polishing has been carefully done—but it is unfortunately not permanent. The bichromate of potash staining is liable to bleach with the action of strong sunlight. The original varnished mahogany will also fade, but the cardinal difference is that the former becomes patchy and opaque, the latter bleaches to a beautiful golden shade with its brilliancy and clearness of texture rather improved than impaired.

It is apparent from the foregoing that modern French-polishing plays little or no part in English furniture of the eighteenth century, but a description of the methods employed may still be of service, if only in detecting the difference between original and modern polishes. The description given applies only to mahogany, although with the exception of the staining, the methods are identical in the case of other woods.

After the surface has been scraped with a steel scraper and carefully glass-papered quite smooth, it is stained with the solution of bichromate of potash in water, of strength according to the colour required. This has the effect of bringing up the grain and making the surface of the wood rough, which has afterwards to be carefully smoothed down with glass-paper after a coating of polish has been applied, care being taken not to rub through the stain or the result will be a patchy surface. A good plan is to rub down the wood before staining with water and a piece of soft pumice-stone, the water causing the grain to rise and the pumice cutting it down again. Mahogany so treated will remain smooth after being stained. When the stain is dry, the next process is to fill in the grain. This is an innovation of the last forty years, the polisher of the early sixties being expected to gradually fill up the grain by working in the polish.

Modern commercialism and the consequent economy of time and labour has devised the method of filling the grain with fine plaster-of-paris, rubbed in with a wet rag. The superfluous plaster on the surface must be removed before it hardens, or the colour of the wood will be ruined. In good work, " rose pink " is mixed with the plaster to colour it, and to prevent the filled grain showing white when the piece is polished. When the plaster-of-paris has set quite hard the wood is then oiled, either with pure linseed oil or a mixture of equal parts of linseed oil and petroleum, the latter drying more effectually and obviating the tendency of the oil to " sweat " through the covering polish.

When the wood has been thoroughly saturated with oil, it is rubbed dry and allowed to stand, if possible, for a day. The actual polishing can now be commenced. The ordinary brown polish, which is the best for mahogany, is made by dissolving shellac in spirit-of-wine, or more generally methylated spirit. If the solution contain too much shellac the work can be more quickly polished, but will rapidly deteriorate, either by cracking or sweating. The polish is applied with a rubber, usually of cotton wool, which is saturated, a fine rag being placed over it and wrapped round, to regulate

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the flow and to prevent the cotton wool from adhering to the surface of the wood. The rubber is applied with a circular motion, care being taken to see that every part of the surface is covered and that the rubber is not allowed to rest on the surface or it will stick. The outer edges of a panel or top require special observation, an old maxim being that the edges require the attention, the centre polishes itself. When a good coating has been worked on, as much pressure being exerted on the rubber as possible without causing the polish to flow out in rings, the work should be put aside for a day and allowed to set. The rubber must be recharged with polish just before it is dry —a dry rubber being likely to scratch the tender polish—but it must never be so saturated that pressure cannot be exerted without causing the polish to run. The more pressure used, the better the finished result will be. After the work has been allowed to stand for twenty-four hours, or longer if possible, the second polishing can be commenced. In the first stage no oil should be used, but in the second a few drops of linseed oil can be flicked on to the surface to facilitate the rubber and to prevent it from sticking. The oil will cause the rubber to leave cloudy smears upon the work, and care must be exercised to see that these smears are kept on the surface and are not allowed to bite into it. The first are caused by the oil and can be removed by the finger; the latter are due to over-saturation of the rubber with polish, and cannot be removed at all. The second stage must be continued until an even brilliant surface is obtained, the same pressure being exerted as before to keep the oil on the surface, this being allowed to remain for the third stage, which is the final and finishing process. In all, the same circular motion must be maintained, as if the rubber be passed up and down or across the grain the surface will become striped and furrowed. In the third stage, equal parts of spirit-of-wine or methylated spirit and polish are used on the rubber, more spirits and less polish being added with every recharge, and the whole quantity gradually diminished until the rubber is gradually worked dry. No oil must be used, the object being to gradually absorb that already on the work, which is done by using less polish and more spirit-of-wine. All smears must be carefully worked out. The final process consists in pouring a few drops of spirit on to a clean rubber and passing this rapidly over the work, and if this be quickly and effectually done, all oil and smears will be removed. The work is now completed.

It must be apparent from the foregoing that mitred mouldings or sunk panels cannot be properly polished *in situ*, but must be done when apart, before the piece of furniture is put together, as otherwise the internal angles and corners will be smeared and dirty. It is by this that subsequent polishing can be immediately detected, as it is obviously impossible to wrench glued joints, mouldings, or beads apart for the purpose of re-polishing.

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The original varnish of eighteenth century mahogany is justly prized by collectors. Apart from the beautiful mellow tone which age alone can give, the older fashion is far more permanent than the modern method. Unfortunately, when the modern French-polishing was introduced during the first half of the nineteenth century, many of the fine old varnished pieces were wilfully stripped to allow of the new method being used. Again, ignorance and lack of appreciation of the artistic value of these old surfaces, and the impossibility of their replacement other than by many years of waxing and friction, led to many of the fine mahogany pieces of the early eighteenth century being scoured with soda or caustic potash, which, of course, soon removed the old varnishes. Ultra-cleanliness is not always a virtue!

The permanent character of these early surfaces can be best demonstrated by the fact that friction improves them, whereas with modern spirit polish, which is on the surface instead of being an integral part of it, rubbing wears the polish away and leaves the wood bare.

From the foregoing it is apparent that any tampering or restoring of original work, excepting where the piece has been entirely stripped, is at once apparent on close examination. Century-old mahogany is always more or less faded, but the bleaching is only on the surface, and the mere cleaning with glass-paper restores it to its original colour, with consequent loss of the old golden tone so prized by the collector. It is surprising that this appreciation is so comparatively recent. Had the same carelessness been the custom with the cleaning of pictures as in the restoration of old furniture, hardly an "old master" would remain to-day in any but a sadly mutilated state. The history of a nation's handicrafts, as distinguished from their machine manufactures, has an interest which depends so much on the integrity of the examples being preserved, that the fashion for the collecting of eighteenth century furniture, with consequent enhancement of commercial values of the pieces themselves, has effectually cured the mischievous habit of tampering with such of the work of the great eighteenth century cabinet-makers as still exists in its original state, thereby allowing these examples to remain as monuments of the designing skill and conscientious workmanship of the furniture "joyners" of the earlier Georgian era.

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Chapter XIX

Forgeries of English Furniture of the Eighteenth Century.

DURING the progress of this book it has been suggested that a chapter on the methods of the antique forger might be added, with advantage to the work. While the subject is somewhat foreign to the general scope of the book itself, which is concerned with the evolution of design in the hands of the various craftsmen of the eighteenth century, the advantage to the collector, for whom this book has been chiefly written, has been considered, and it has been decided to include such information as can be imparted without actual demonstration and comparison, two forms of illustration which are obviously inadmissible in any book by any known reproductive process.

It must be mentioned, at the outset, that this chapter is concerned only with the period circumscribed by the title of the book, which covers the years, approximately, from 1689 to 1800. We can, therefore, begin the subject by dividing the work of this period into four distinct classes. In the first we can place furniture, such as Chinese and Japanese lacquer, which cannot be imitated by European methods; the second includes certain kinds of English lacquer, plain walnut and marqueterie furniture, which it is not commercially practicable to reproduce; the third contains furniture, usually of provincial origin, which is too simple in character or crude in design to be worthy the attention of the furniture forger; and in the last, and by far the most important class, are examples of walnut, mahogany and gilt furniture, the market values of which are far in excess of the cost of reproduction. We can, therefore, simplify matters at the outset by eliminating the first three of these subdivisions of our subject, confining our attention solely to the last one.

Before considering these forgeries of the eighteenth century furniture, it would be as well to define exactly what is implied by a "forgery" in this connection. The meaning of the term may be briefly stated thus: a reproduction only becomes a forgery when an attempt is made to artificially impart an appearance of age to a piece which does not properly belong to it, with or without an intention on the part of its maker to deceive. This latter condition is necessarily implied, as an article of furniture which has been spuriously aged and frankly sold as a reproduction by one may be, and frequently is, represented as a genuine antique by another.

In an investigation of this kind, our starting point is necessarily the genuine article itself, and it is frequently a nice point to decide where antiquity begins and ends. With

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regard to a chair or bookcase, for instance, which is in its original condition, untouched excepting for a century of wax polishing or friction, there can be no dispute; but pieces of mahogany, walnut, or gilt furniture in their original eighteenth century condition are so exceedingly rare that in the majority of cases they would not be acknowledged as genuine by nine so-called experts out of ten. The greater number of the examples in existence at the present day have either been stripped and repolished, over-varnished, or regilt at a subsequent period. The matter of condition must remain, therefore, a highly elastic one, depending upon the idiosyncrasy of individual collectors. We can safely lay it down as a guide, however, that where a piece has been structurally altered or embellished by the addition of carving, inlay, painting or gilding (not regilding) it is no longer a genuine example and has no right to be referred to as an antique. It matters little whether the additions have enhanced, or detracted from its original value, the integrity of the particular example is gone, and for our present purpose it has ceased to be an antique as much as if a new chair were constructed to fit an old set of castors.

Let us now seek to subdivide antique forgeries in like manner. We can resolve these under three general headings. The first includes all furniture which has been made outright, whether from new or old wood; in the second we can consider genuine old furniture which has been embellished by the addition of carving, inlay, painting or gilding, none of which are inherent parts of the piece as intended by its maker; and the third subdivision includes those examples which have been constructed from old portions of other articles to form a piece of furniture which is, in its nature, different from the original state of any of its parts. It is a moot point to what extent restorations may be taken, but this latter definition does not touch this vexed question, as a restoration, properly conducted, only seeks to replace parts which are missing, or to mend others which are broken, the intention being to restore a piece to its original condition, not to make something totally different out of the ruins.

A good deal has been written, in books dealing with the subject of English furniture, regarding the methods of the maker of spurious antiques, but each writer has assumed that all such forgeries necessarily fall within the first of the three categories mentioned above. It requires very little experience and acumen to detect imitations of this nature when the eye has been trained to observe genuine examples for any length of time. With mahogany, for example, the actual wood used during the eighteenth century differs very materially from many of the varieties imported at the present day. In the attempt to give an appearance of age, the forger nearly always goes too far; the piece is not one hundred but a thousand years old, before it leaves his hands. Bleaching is effected by caustics, alkalies, and acids, which destroy the life of the wood, whereas the action of sunlight leaves a golden hue, full of colour and depth, both in walnut and

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mahogany. The effect of time and gentle but protracted friction on the sharp edges of carving, rounds off both external and inner edges; the harsh methods of the "faker," friction with brick-dust or pumice powder, affects only the outer surfaces. The signs of swelling of the fibre of the wood with powerful caustics can also be easily noticed; old mahogany, in its original state, has a peculiar metallic appearance which is unmistakable.

Experts have various methods of judging the genuineness of antique furniture, but, for obvious reasons, they do not readily impart these to others; many rely on a species of instinct, and it must be said that first impressions of a piece are usually the most trustworthy; more mistakes are made by attempting to reason instinct away than by relying on demonstrable data, in a judgment of this kind. There are, however, certain rules which are generally applied, in the case of long experience almost subconsciously so, and in this respect expert instinct may be regarded as crystallised knowledge, which from long use has become practically automatic. The first test to be applied is, does the piece *look* right? Are the details such as one would expect in an example of the particular period to which it purports to belong? If not, are the offending details later than the piece itself? It is of the greatest assistance to be able, instantly, to know where to look, and what for; a trained expert will pounce on the weak spot in a moment where the uneducated amateur will aimlessly examine without detecting the obvious. Always look for signs of construction which do not properly belong to the article of furniture in its present state. With a bookcase or china cabinet door, for example, hinged on the end of the case and covering its edge; if the styles are narrower than the rails, the probability is that the doors may have been added; they may have belonged to another piece and have been hinged *between* the ends, and the planing away of the edges where the hinges have been cut in is responsible for the diminution of the breadth of the outer styles. Again, if there are signs of holes which have been filled up, consider whether these may not have been originally tenon-holes, and if these have no present function to fulfil, the doors cannot belong to the piece itself.

The questions of design and proportion are of paramount importance, particularly with chairs. If these be elaborate and original, the general design, proportions, and workmanship are all equally certain to be fine; it would not have paid to put a large amount of expensive work into a chair without first studying its general lines, and it will be found, with practically all of the eighteenth century work, that general proportions are nearly always automatically correct. Workmanship and constructional details are also of the highest importance: in fact they are the most reliable indications of originality, or the reverse, if a demonstrated opinion be required. A knowledge of

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the tools which were used,—and also which were not used,—by cabinet-makers and carvers of the eighteenth century, is a very necessary accomplishment. With practice, the signs of the use of a long "trying-plane" instead of a short "smoother," of an iron or a wooden plane, one with a "single" or a "double" iron, a steel scraper, or a "sanding machine,"—although to do the "faker" justice he does not manufacture on such a wholesale scale as to need the use of power machinery,—can be noticed. There are many chisels and gouges which are used by wood-carvers at the present day which were unknown in the eighteenth century, and as they were introduced especially for certain kinds of work, it follows as a logical necessity that such work *must* be modern.

Original gilding is the most difficult of all to detect, chiefly owing to the abominable habit which seems to have been general during the early nineteenth century, of patching gilded work with so-called "gold" paint, and this is, obviously, very easy to imitate. Where the original gold surface still exists, one should look carefully for evidences of "toning"; the smell of turpentine should be sufficient evidence of this. In its absence it is a good plan to take a soft rag and turpentine and endeavour to remove any evidences of age, first cleaning away dust and dirt with a piece of slightly damp cotton wool. The turpentine should not remove *anything* from clean gold, if it has been applied by the size-water process; with oil gilding this method will not serve, as the turpentine will remove the gold. Old gilding has a peculiar metallic appearance, and its colour is a pale lemon yellow, as if the gold had been alloyed with a percentage of silver. Where the gold has worn through, the appearance of the preparation underlying it should be studied. In the chapters on mirror frames in the first and second volumes of this book the methods of the various periods were described in detail, and the knowledge of these should prove a valuable guide.

Much of the early lacquer of English workmanship is, in itself, a forgery, an imitation of the imported Oriental work of the period. It varies so much in quality, some examples being beneath contempt, that it is hardly safe to lay down any rules for the detection of frauds. A good plan is to take a coin with a milled edge,—a florin will do excellently,—and wrapping it in a fold of a white handkerchief, make a mark on the lacquered surface. Should this leave a stain on the handkerchief, the piece is certainly a modern imitation. As oil paint does not become thoroughly hard for some years, this is a more reliable indication than would, at first, be supposed. An obvious precaution is to choose a place where the mark of the coin will not show.

It is very unsafe to trust to surface condition with plain walnut or early marqueterie furniture. Walnut bleaches readily with the action of sunlight in a very short time, and this faded walnut has only been prized during the last few years; before

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about 1885 it was a sign that the wood required to be scraped and repolished. In the opening chapters of the first volume of this book the peculiar qualities of original Queen Anne varnish were described at length, and it is not necessary to add anything here. With marqueterie furniture the "springing" of either the inlay or the veneer often necessitates the reapplication of the hot caul, with consequent repolishing. Generally speaking, early walnut and marqueterie furniture is too costly to reproduce with advantage, considering the relatively low prices which pieces realise in the salerooms.

Original satinwood is the most difficult of all the eighteenth century work to forge, and it is hardly ever seriously attempted. The later eighteenth century pieces were frequently copied during the years from about 1860 to 1885; but the golden, figured East India satinwood was usually substituted for the straight-grained, lemon-yellow West India, and as the general proportions of these later pieces are usually very clumsy, they need deceive no one acquainted with the eighteenth century work. The usual trick is to embellish the genuine plain satinwood with painting of garlands of flowers, medallions and the like, and although the gradual sinking of the old colours in the pores of the wood renders the distinction between old and new decorative painting very marked, it is difficult to indicate this difference without examples and ocular demonstration. It will be noticed, on close examination with a magnifying glass, that the outer edges of original painting of flowers and the like are never quite sharp; they have the appearance of a photographic image thrown slightly out of focus. This is due to the gradual uneven sinking of the paint and the action of the atmosphere on it. This, however, is a point where a few minutes of careful observation are worth hours of explanation.

So far, the obvious "fakes" referred to by so many writers on this subject, such as single chairs with added arms and the like, have been ignored. These are the clumsy methods of a bygone generation. It is generally assumed by those writers already referred to, that the "faker" begrudges an extra hour or two of labour on a piece, on which, if it be successful, he expects to be recouped for his outlay, possibly tenfold. Thus Mr. Owen Wheeler, in his description of some antique forgeries, refers to the tracery in cabinet doors as being frequently "laid *en bloc* over a large pane of glass," and "where framed separately, the joints are frequently 'snick-fitted'"—whatever that may mean—"on the dovetail principle, this being a much less costly means of production," &c. &c. The absurdity of the above hardly needs comment; when an expert's wits are pitted against those of a clever forger, who is engaged in a game where the prizes are high and the chances very much in his favour, it is very bad policy to underrate his antagonist. He would certainly not credit him with attempting to imitate the fine cabinet-making of the eighteenth century, which commands relatively

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enormous prices at the present day, and then seeking to "scamp" his work in a way that would be thought reprehensible even in an East-End "sweating den." The forger of antiques is an artist, of a very high order, in a discreditable way. Age can be imitated in so many different ways; compare, for instance, a stone building in a pure country air with a similar building in London, or a cabinet kept in the drawing-room of a mansion, probably covered up with dust-sheets for the greater part of a year, with another left to rot in a damp cellar; and it will be understood that the writer, with a workshop training, still finds it advisable to keep himself well acquainted with what is being made in the "antique world," and to study, at first hand, the little peculiarities and details which characterise the work of each maker. To thoroughly know the subject of antique furniture is the study of a lifetime; nearly every day adds to the store of knowledge acquired. In this connection one is reminded of the story of the professor to whom one of his pupils was outlining his plans for the future when he ceased to be a student. "Cease to be a student!" exclaimed the professor; "I am thrice your age, and I am a student still!"

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Chapter XX.

English Furniture of the Eighteenth Century. Conclusion.

THE history and development of English furniture has now been traced during a period of rather over one hundred years, from 1689–1795. Beyond this it were idle to go. The depraved taste which could tolerate, and even foster, a style such as the "English Empire" of Thomas Hope has nothing to render it worthy of being recorded in the same way as the evolution of the eighteenth century furniture has been followed. Perhaps not the least annoying feature of the furniture after 1795 is the fine cabinet-work and superbly figured wood which was lavished on the worthless creations of the so-called "Empire" period. A bald copy of the French post-Consulate style, it had not the same historical features to redeem it from the charge of sheer ugliness.

We can turn, therefore, if not with pleasure, certainly with profit, from this decadence of English cabinet-work, and before finally closing our subject, glance for a space at the conditions which tended to produce much of the finer furniture of the "Golden Age" of English cabinet-making. Several attempts were made, during the progress of this book, to outline briefly the state of English society at the various periods. There is such a close and necessary relation between the manners and customs of a people and the taste in furniture with which they embellished their homes, that although these references were somewhat in the nature of digressions from the main outline of our subject, some knowledge of the conditions prevailing was requisite for a proper understanding of the purpose and style of the furniture of the various periods.

We have now to consider another necessary relation, that of the artisan to his work, which is just as important a factor in the evolution of English furniture, and to which a few remarks may be devoted as a fitting conclusion to our subject.

In these days of power machinery and specialisation of production, it is difficult to appreciate the close personal association which must have existed between the eighteenth century cabinet-makers and the furniture which they made. The artisan lived with his work for a far longer period than can even be conceived at the present day, and his scope was infinitely wider in every way. With an object of applied art, mere labour and time do not necessarily count for much as far as the finished result is concerned, but where the work and time involved is very great, this fact may deter

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from hasty production, commenced without careful consideration of expense, material, or design.

The furniture of the eighteenth century had almost to be hewn from the log. Every surface had to be laboriously smoothed with the plane, scraper, and stone, every moulding "scratched," and every cutter made with the file and oilstone. The "rip," "half-rip," shaping and fret-saws had all to be operated by hand. The same process had to be undergone to cut out a drawer side or a large bookcase end. At the present day, when timber is cut, shaped, or pierced on the circular, band, or fret-saws, moulded on the spindle, the horizontal moulding machine, or the "four cutter," planed, scraped, or even "sanded" by power, tongued and grooved, tenoned and mortised, dovetailed, jointed, and even carved by machine, it is almost a farce to style the workman who puts the piece together a "cabinet-maker." The sacrifice of that artistic interest of the workman in his task which produced such sterling results in the eighteenth century, to the mania for specialisation and consequent cheapening of production, is inevitable—and regrettable. This degeneration has reached such a pass that now one workman, or even the one workshop, makes sideboards; another, bedroom suites; a third, cabinets; a fourth, tables; the other branches of the trade being either unknown or unpractised; at the outset from commercial considerations, and after a while, from sheer inability. The workman of "all-round" experience, skilled in his trade, one who has served his time in a shop where patterns were rarely duplicated, and has emerged from his apprenticeship with a craftsman's appreciation of what is "fit and fine," is being surely stamped out; sacrificed to cheapness of production, with its inevitable concomitant, specialisation of manufacture and limiting of experience. The beneficial system of apprenticeship has become almost a dead letter. A dozen trades have grown out of the one. Thus we have so-called cabinet-makers who can make but the one thing—tables, cabinets, bedroom suites, and the like. We have turners, moulders, planers, band-saw workers, fret-cutters, marqueterie-cutters, polishers, and in some workshops there are even men whose sole business is to glass-paper mouldings. Can it be otherwise than that the personal interest of the cabinet-maker in the piece which he is producing, the taste for form, proportion, and design, the spirit of emulation in workmanship, should have all departed, replaced by a sense of mere drudgery, where the sole idea is to fill a time-sheet with a bald record of as many hours made in the week as possible? As well might one expect an artist to take an intelligent interest in painting a picture by a process where his own part consisted of nothing more than the turning of a handle.

It must not be imagined that nothing cheap was produced during the eighteenth century; shoddiness, unfortunately, is older than this, in fact, if not in name. Chippendale himself was a considerable sinner in this regard. There are many examples

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of the work of this period which were obviously made merely to sell. They are worthless as specimens of our national handicrafts, but even in these we have not the repetition of the same pattern. True, they are not examples of what the workman could do, but what commercial considerations forced upon him. Added to this, they are not general. Here and there we find examples of cabinet-work, such as some pieces, unfortunately a minority only, which have been illustrated in this book, which are spontaneous creations. One feels instinctively that the maker had a definite idea to express, and had taken an intelligent pleasure in realising it in the best possible manner. There is no piecing together of the details of pre-existing work, no re-hashing of half-a-dozen examples to make a seventh ; the thing is spontaneously conceived, and executed with honest pride and care.

It might be thought, at first, that the designing of furniture would be the province of the draughtsman, rather than of the cabinet-maker. While this is true in some measure, it must be confessed that neither a sketch or even a "working drawing," however carefully they may be prepared, can adequately express the finished piece in a satisfactory manner. Such details as the occultations of mouldings, the proportions of members when viewed in perspective, and the qualities of light and shade, can never be adequately expressed on paper ; a model is necessary. Again, a space may appear empty in a sketch which wood of fine figure may relieve ; a proportion may be right for satinwood and yet appear heavy in mahogany ; a square tapered leg may appear too massive when viewed cornerwise, whereas another of the same thickness, but turned instead of square, may look too slight. These are the details which should be left to the cabinet-maker to correct ; they depend upon his judgment. Again, who should be better fitted to design furniture than the one whose business it is to make it ? By designing is not meant the ability to produce a more or less faithful picture, smartly coloured, drawn especially to catch the eye of a customer, but a mere rough record of form and detail, corrected in the making as may be found necessary, added to here and subtracted from there. This system—and the same applies to nearly all branches of applied art—is the only one which will produce fine cabinet-work. Mere technical excellence is of little moment, comparatively. Slovenliness of workmanship is, of course, undesirable, but furniture which has the mechanical evenness of surface of polished steel is also not ideal ; one sighs for a little irregularity ; everything is so horribly exact, and so palpably new, as bright and smooth as glass-paper and French polish can make it. The cultured man inevitably prefers such furniture as time has softened and mellowed, even if old and shabby, to such glaring atrocities. Added to this, there is the curiously unexpected element in eighteenth century furniture. There is little or no attempt at the execrable matching of pieces so prevalent at the present day, where you may guess what the general

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character of the furniture of the one room is, from an examination of one piece. Everything does not lie on the surface, as it were; closer and longer examination reveals additional beauties, not apparent at the first or a second glance. Nothing is assertive; there is a quaintness even in faulty proportions. It may be truly said of the furniture of the later eighteenth century that one has to live with it to appreciate its charm. The reference is especially to the more simple forms; with the palatial furniture of the early eighteenth century one has always the sense of unfitness and disproportion which is absent with that of the later Georgian era. Added to all this, there is no irritating uniformity; you may possess a dozen chairs of the same pattern, and close examination will show that they all differ, in slight points, from each other. When they were made, with the methods and the tools then in use, the greatest care and time would have been necessary to make them exactly alike; now, to make them differ would mean an equal expenditure of time and labour,—or more probably, a dislocation of shop routine. Machinery can neither select nor think, and yet we do our best, by the present-day system, to transform workmen into machines.

Whether the conditions which fostered the spontaneity and creative ability of the cabinet-makers of the eighteenth century will ever return is exceedingly improbable. Machinery and machine methods appear to have come to stay. Both can be defended; they have brought articles within the reach of the many, which were only possible to the few, even within the last twenty years. Cheapness does not necessarily imply shoddiness; we can produce at a rate which was impossible half-a-century ago. When, however, in the hurry and rush of the present day we can spare a few moments to reflect upon the craftsman of the eighteenth century, slowly fashioning, with skilled eye and hand, and with pride in his ability, the furniture which has been preserved to us at the present day, one is forced to recognise that the qualities which they gave to their work are inimitable by our present-day methods, in spite of improved means and apparatus, and the heirloom of experience of all that has gone before. English furniture of the eighteenth century is worthy of the time in which it was made and of the workmen who produced it. Can we say as much to-day?

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LIST OF WOODS USED IN ENGLISH FURNITURE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

ACACIA.—The wood usually designated by this name differs materially from the true Acacia, a genus of plants allied to the Mimosæ, one of the leading divisions of the great Leguminous order. The English Acacia is properly the *Robinia pseudo-Acacia*, a papilionaceous tree originally brought from North America. The wood, which is little used in eighteenth century cabinet work other than for friezing or inlaying, is dull yellow in colour, with brown markings. It is generally found on bandings of satinwood pieces of the last quarter of the eighteenth century, and of provincial origin; on London-made furniture, tulip or bleached rosewood (*palisandré*) was usually substituted.

The *Acacia Arabica*, or gum arabic tree, an importation from India or Arabia, can only be cultivated in England under glass, and rarely grows beyond the size of a shrub. Nearly three hundred species of Acacia are known in Australia, but in the eighteenth century only the *Robinia pseudo-Acacia* was used in furniture, and then only very sparingly.

ACER.—See Maple.

ACER: PSEUDO-PLATANUS.—See Sycamore.

ALDER.—The *Alnus glutinosa*. An English tree which usually grows in wet and marshy soil. From its ability to resist decay and rot from the action of water it is frequently used for the piles of bridges, &c. Alder is sometimes employed for the rails of "stickback" Windsor chairs of the old-fashioned "hooped" pattern. Those of the later eighteenth century were usually made with elaborately carved central splats.

ALKANET (Arabic *al-kanna*, Henna).—Several varieties of English plants are known by this name. The *Alkanna tinctoria* is used to stain linseed oil to a deep red; this was generally used in the eighteenth century to darken the colour of mahogany. Sheraton confuses the *Alkanna tinctoria* with the genus *Anchusa*, in the article in his *Cabinet Dictionary*. See chapter on "Original and Modern Polishes" in this volume. The usual trade term of "aconite root" is a misnomer, as alkanet has no relation to the blue monk's-hood.

AMBOYNA is the wood of *Pterospermum Indicum*, one of the Byttneriads. It is a native of the West Indies. Amboyna is nearly always found, in eighteenth century furniture, used in veneers, either for covering whole surfaces, or for inlaid panels or bandings. It has a rich yellowish-brown colour with a very close "bird's-eye" figure.

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Amboyna closely resembles Thuja, but the latter is somewhat darker, and the figure is not so abundant.

ARBOR VITÆ.—See THUJA.

ASH.—The well-known *Fraxinus excelsior*. The wood is very tough, capable of taking strong lateral strains without breaking. It is light yellow in colour, with irregular longitudinal brown markings. Ash is generally used for the seats of "hoop-back" Windsor chairs. When polished, it somewhat resembles oak. Many of the provincial chairs of the Queen Anne type are made from ash. It is also sometimes used for the sides and bottoms of drawers.

BEECH: *Fagus*.—Of the natural order *Cupuliferæ*. The wood of the common Beech, *Fagus sylvatica*, is generally used in the manufacture of chairs of the kitchen type. Many of the later Sheraton period, especially those intended for painting or gilding, were frequently made from beech. The wood is brownish-white in colour, with an unmistakable speckled grain. The tree often grows to a height of 100 to 120 feet, with a diameter from 4 to 8 feet. At Burnham Beeches, near Slough, are some beech trees of enormous size. Beeches are found in nearly every part of the globe.

BIRCH.—The name of the trees and shrubs of the genus *Betula*. The *Betula alba* or common Birch of England and the *Betula lenta* or Mahogany Birch of North America were sometimes used in the furniture of the later eighteenth century, especially for carcase-work where the front surfaces were veneered with satinwood. Birch is frequently found with a beautiful rippled figure, and when polished it strongly resembles East India satinwood both in colour and figure.

BLACK WALNUT.—A name frequently applied to varieties of *Juglans nigra*. See WALNUT.

BROWN EBONY—See EBONY (COROMANDEL).

CANARY WOOD.—A term used in the eighteenth century for the wood of *Persea indica* or *Persea canariensis* of Madeira. It is really an inferior kind of mahogany, light yellow in colour. It was extensively used for veneering and inlaying. See MAHOGANY.

CEDAR, BARBADOES: *Cedrela odorata*.—A tree of the natural order *Cedrelaceæ*; a native of the West Indies and tropical America. The tree reaches a height of 80 feet, with a trunk of great thickness. The wood is soft and inferior, although possessing an agreeable aromatic odour. It is generally used for cigar-boxes, and for drawer sides in the later eighteenth century cabinet-work.

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CEDAR or CEDAR OF LEBANON.—Usually known, technically, as Pencil Cedar. Of the natural order of the *Coniferæ ;* genus *Cedrus Libani*. The wood is very soft, pinkish in colour, and agreeably aromatic. The boards are sometimes largely impregnated with sap, the wood then being white and worthless. This is probably due to the tree being felled when young, as cedars attain a great age, the grove at Lebanon having some trees which are said to be two thousand years old. Pencil cedar is much used for the sides and bottoms of small drawers in the later work of the eighteenth century. Cedars were first introduced into England in 1640 by the Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery, and were planted at Wilton Park, near Salisbury.

CHESTNUT is of two kinds, that of *Castanea vesca* or Spanish Chestnut, and *Æsculus hippocastanum* or Horse Chestnut. The latter is generally used for furniture, also for the backs of hair-brushes. The wood, when unpolished, is nearly as white as sycamore, and when highly figured closely resembles it, but the grain of chestnut is coarser than that of sycamore. Chestnut is frequently used in cabinet-work of the later eighteenth century as a substitute for satinwood, and is frequently mistaken for it.

EBONY.—Includes woods of the natural order *Ebenaceæ*. *Diospyros ebenus* grows in Madagascar, Mauritius, and Ceylon. The last-named is light in colour with rich dark brown stripes, and is generally known as Coromandel. *Diospyros ebanaster*, *Diospyros melanoxylon*, *Diospyros Mabalo*, *Diospyros tomentosa*, and *Diospyros Roylei* are other varieties, all of which are nearly, if not quite black in hue. Ebony is close-grained and exceedingly heavy. It is rarely used other than in veneers.

ELM : *Ulmus*.—A genus of trees of the natural order *Ulmaceæ*, natives of temperate climates. The English elm, *Ulmus campestris*, grows to a height of 60 to 80 feet. The wood is fairly hard, with a broad serrated grain, and is very durable in damp places. It is generally used for coffins, and the seats of Windsor chairs. It is light yellow in colour, and takes a good polish. Elm is sometimes used for constructional work in eighteenth century furniture. The broad-leaved, or Wych Elm (*Ulmus montana*), varieties of which are known as the Giant or Chichester Elm, is indigenous to Scotland. It is a tree of quick growth, and forms protuberances of gnarled wood on the trunk, which are finely knotted and richly veined. These were usually cross-cut into layers, and used for veneering, especially on early Queen Anne cabinet-work. These pieced veneers are usually referred to as "pollarded elm."

HOLLY is found in many parts of Europe, Africa, Asia, and South America. The English variety, the *Ilex Aquifolium*, yields a beautiful white wood, usually with a very small speckled grain. It is generally used by marqueterie cutters, either in the natural state or dyed in various colours. It is also used for inlaying in the form of lines or

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stringing, but is rarely employed in veneers, other than for marqueterie. It was a favourite wood, for inlaying in small panels, with English joiners from the earliest Tudor times. An imported variety, the Holly Oak, *Quercus Ilex*, is sometimes used for lathe beds. It is darker in colour than the English holly, and much harder and heavier.

KINGWOOD is the wood of *Brya ebenus*, a native of Brazil. It is sometimes known as American ebony or bois-violet. It is somewhat lighter in colour than rosewood, and more strongly marked. It is generally used in cross-cut veneers, and usually for bandings, although some rare pieces of Queen Anne cabinet work are to be found entirely veneered with this wood.

LABURNUM.—The wood of *Cytisus laburnum*. The tree was first cultivated in England about 1597. The heart-wood is hard and durable, varying from a yellow streaked with brown to a dark reddish brown. It is sometimes used by turners for lathe chucks. Laburnum was extensively used during the reigns of William III. and Anne for veneering, usually in "oyster pieces," *i.e.* veneers cut transversely from saplings.

LIGNUM VITÆ is the wood of *Guiacum officinale*, a native of Cuba and the West Indian Islands. In colour it is a dark brown, streaked with black, and strongly marked. It is only used, in furniture, in veneer form. The wood is fairly easy to work when freshly cut, but it rapidly hardens on exposure to the atmosphere. Lignum vitæ is generally used for skittles, bowls, and croquet balls. When thoroughly seasoned it is extremely hard, but is very liable to crack and split.

LIME-TREE or LINDEN: *Tilia*.—Genus of the natural order *Tiliaceæ*, natives of Europe, Northern Asia, and North America. The wood of the *Tilia Europæa* is white and very soft, being practically without cross-grain. It is much esteemed by carvers, and was extensively used by Grinling Gibbons for nearly all of his important work. The American Lime, *Tilia Americana* or *Tilia glabra*, is known here as American Whitewood or Basswood. It has a pronounced greenish tinge, is remarkably free from knots, and grows to a great size.

LYSILOMA SABICU.—See Sabicu.

MAHOGANY.—The timber of *Swietenia Mahagoni* of the family of the *Cedrelaceæ*. Native of Central America. Mahogany is said to have been introduced into England by Sir Walter Raleigh in 1595, but does not appear to have come into general use until about 1720. There are many varieties in use at the present day, those from Honduras and Madeira (*Persea indica*) being inferior to that from Cuba. The mahogany of the eighteenth century is nearly always of the latter variety, generally referred to as

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"Spanish." "Spanish" mahogany varies considerably. Some kinds are very hard, dark in colour, free from figure, and with a close, white-flecked grain; these are generally used for the tops of high-class dining-tables. Other kinds are known as "plum pudding" or "ocean-figured," "fiddleback" (similar in figure to well-marked sycamore) and "curl." This latter is rather a species of freak in the growth of the tree, and the rich effect is often enhanced by cutting veneers at an obtuse angle with the line of the trunk. Curl mahogany is rarely found in English furniture of prior date to 1750. Mahogany, when polished in the natural colour, is usually of a golden-brown shade, but it is generally stained with a solution of bichromate of potash in water, when every degree of red, nearly to black, can be obtained. This method of staining does not appear to have come into vogue before about 1830, and should, therefore, never be found in untouched specimens of eighteenth century furniture.

MAPLE.—The genus *Acer*. The Great Maple, *Acer pseudo-platanus*, is usually called the Sycamore. *Acer striatum*, from North America, furnishes a white wood, much used for inlaying by marqueterie workers. The well-known "bird's-eye" maple, which is extensively employed in panelling, especially for interior work in ships, is the wood of the North American *Acer saccharinum* or Sugar Maple.

OAK.—The genus *Quercus*. There are about 250 species, nearly all of which yield excellent timber. The common, or British Oak, *Quercus robur*, is almost exclusively found in eighteenth century cabinet-work, with certain exceptions in the case of the periods of James II., William III., and Anne, which have been noticed in the first volume. English oak is of a yellowish colour, toning to a rich brown, and often nearly to black, with age. When cut at right angles to the medullary rays, towards the heart of the trunk, the boards often exhibit a speckled, or "silver" figure, which is greatly prized in Tudor and Stuart panelling. Other varieties of *Quercus* are used at the present day, generally known as American, Austrian (or wainscot), Riga, and Bavarian oak. All the varieties, when exposed to wind and rain, unprotected by polish or varnish, rapidly acquire a silver-grey shade. This can be noticed in oak pale-fencing.

OLIVE WOOD is the timber of the genus *Oleaceæ*. The common Olive, *Olea Europæa*, is a thorny shrub in its wild state, but through cultivation attains a height of 20 to 40 feet, and attains a prodigious age. Olive wood takes a beautiful polish, with oil and continual friction. It is of a greenish-yellow, with black cloudy spots and veins. Olive wood, especially when pollarded (*q.v.*), was frequently used for veneering the fronts of the later long-case clocks of the eighteenth century. Some specimens of this wood, when highly polished, have the appearance of greenish-yellow horn.

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PADOUK.—The wood of *Pterocarpus indicus*, a native of Burma. Padouk is somewhat lighter in colour than rosewood, and more strongly tinged with red. The grain is very similar, but has a peculiar silkiness of texture. Padouk is very hard and heavy. It appears to have been first imported into England about 1730. Occasional pieces of the early and middle Chippendale periods are found, made entirely from this wood. Its toughness admits of delicate fret-cutting, impossible in mahogany.

PEAR-TREE.—The *Pyrus Communis* is a native tree of Britain, and grows extensively south of Yorkshire. The wood is close-grained, similar to boxwood but darker in colour and not quite so hard. It has no figure. Pear-tree is sometimes used for the carcase-work of small articles of furniture, and in rare instances for the frames of chairs. In the latter case the wood is usually stained black and polished. Pear-tree is also used in thick veneers on Queen Anne cabinet work.

PINE: *Pinus.*—A genus of trees of the natural order *Coniferæ*. The genus is usually held to include all kinds of Fir, Larch, and Cedar. Pines are widely diffused over the whole of the Northern Hemisphere. The wood of the Scotch Pine, *Pinus sylvestris*, is the variety usually found in eighteenth century cabinet-work. It is white and rather soft, straight in grain, easy to work, comparatively free from knots, and stands well, without shrinking, warping, or cracking. Pine, of the quality used at this period, is practically unobtainable at the present day.

PINE, PITCH.—See PITCH-PINE.

PITCH-PINE: *Pinus rigida.*—A native of Savannah, in the Southern States of America. Is very strong and durable. The wood is yellow in colour with a light brown streaked grain. It is strongly resinous. Pitch-pine is sparingly used in eighteenth century furniture.

PLANE-TREE.—The sole genus of the natural order *Platanaceæ*. A native of Eastern Europe, although it has been acclimatised in Southern England. The wood of the young tree is yellowish-white; that of the old, a medium brown. It is close grained and takes a high polish. Plane-tree varies considerably as regards figure, from quite plain to a fiddleback, "ripple," or "lace" markings. The figured specimens usually masquerade under fancy names, such as "lace-wood," "silk-wood," and the like.

POLLARDING is the cutting off of the whole crown of a tree, leaving it to send out new branches from the top of the stem. The new branches are never equal in magnitude to the original ones, although more numerous, and when pollarding is often repeated, the trunk presents a series of amputated stumps which is very unsightly. Pollarding

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is usually practised in districts where fuel is scarce. The stumps often exhibit abnormalities in grain, and these portions are generally cut into veneers and pieced together by the cabinet-maker where an interesting or unusual surface appearance is desired. Pollarded woods, especially of walnut, oak, ash, elm, yew, and olive, were extensively used during the early part of the eighteenth century. The wood usually known as "pollard oak" is not a pollarded wood at all. The term is a misnomer.

PURPLE-WOOD or PURPLE-HEART.—The heart-wood of *Copaifera pubiflora* and *Copaifera bracteata*. The wood is usually imported in logs from 8 to 12 inches square, and about 10 feet long. It was formerly extensively used by gunsmiths for ramrods. Purple-wood is seldom found in eighteenth century furniture excepting in the form of lines or edge banding. When freshly planed up the wood has a pronounced purple colour, but when exposed to the air, even if polished, it rapidly darkens to the hue of rosewood. Purple-wood is tough and heavy, although somewhat open in grain texture. Purple-wood is a native of Brazil.

ROSEWOOD.—Several kinds are used in cabinet-work; some very light and streaked with dark lines, others varying nearly to the shade of ebony. The darker kinds are generally from two or three species of *Dalbergia Nigra*, the lighter from *Genuta canariensis*, *Convolvulus floridus* and *Convolvulus Scoparia*, all natives of Brazil. Rosewood is seldom used in eighteenth century furniture other than for inlaid panels or banding; it came into vogue as a constructional wood during the first years of the nineteenth century and towards the middle was extensively used. The wood is hard and heavy, and when freshly planed has an agreeable aromatic odour. Rosewood is closely related to the *Dalbergia Sissor*—Bengal Sissorwood—and *Dalbergia latifolia*, the East Indian Rosewood.

SABICU or SAVICU.—The wood of *Lysiloma Sabicu*, a genus of *Mimoseæ*, akin to Acacia. The wood of *Acacia formosa*, a native of Cuba, was sparingly used in the eighteenth century for furniture of the early Chippendale type. It is very hard and tough, dull red in colour, similar to plain mahogany stained with bichromate of potash, and with a close, short grain. Sabicu was used for the stairs in the Great Exhibition of 1851, at the Crystal Palace in Hyde Park, before its removal to Sydenham. It is said that after six months of constant traffic, the stairs hardly exhibited any signs of wear. A set of chairs, of Sabicu, inlaid with mother-of-pearl, are to be seen in Sir John Soane's Museum in Lincoln's Inn Fields.

SATINWOOD—One of the most popular woods used for the furniture of the later eighteenth century, by Hepplewhite, Sheraton, and their schools. Two kinds were known and used, namely, East and West India Satinwood respectively, but the former

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does not appear to have been imported until nearly 1800, and was therefore unknown in the work of Hepplewhite.

East India Satinwood, *Chloroxylon Swietenia* (Greek *chloros*=green, and *xulon*=wood), is named after Gerard van Swietan, physician to Maria Theresa of Austria (1700–1772). See MAHOGANY. The tree is a genus of the *Cedrelaceæ*, which includes the tropical American mahogany, the yellow wood of New South Wales (*Oxleya Xanthoxyla*), and the red-wood of Coromandel (*Soymida febrifuga*). There are nine known genera and twenty-five species, including the Bastard Cedars of Barbadoes (from the wood of which cigar-boxes are made) and Australia, the latter known as Curana, Samaria, Acuyari, and Mara.

East India Satinwood is a native tree of Ceylon and the Coromandel coast. It is usually somewhat darker in colour than the West Indian variety, and is found varying from a plain texture to the richest rippled figure. Occasionally it has a broad mottled figure resembling that of fine Spanish mahogany. It can always be distinguished from the West Indian wood by its colour and the peculiar greasy appearance it acquires when polished. West India Satinwood is usually plain in texture, sometimes with a slight cedar or pine figure, and is generally of a lemon-yellow colour when freshly planed. It tones, with age, to a rich golden yellow. The wood is hard, close-grained, and heavy. West India Satinwood, *Ferolia Guianensis*, is a native tree of Guiana. The difference between the two kinds of satinwood should be closely studied, as the knowledge is often valuable in distinguishing between genuine and spurious eighteenth century work. Modern satinwood is frequently stained with coffee to give the work an appearance of age. The shavings from West India Satinwood burn with a sweet odour which is absent in the East India.

SNAKE-WOOD is the heart-wood of *Brosium Arbletii*, called also *Piratinera guiansis*; an Arctocarpad, native of Brazil. The tree often grows to a height of 70 feet. The wood is generally used in veneers, for inlaying and banding. It is of a pale yellow colour, with serrated markings of a darker yellow. Snake-wood is only found in the cabinet-work of the very late eighteenth century.

SYCAMORE.—*Acer pseudo-platanus* (the maple called plane-tree) was first introduced into England in 1551. It grows extensively in Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Italy, and Western Asia. The name "Sycamore" is very ancient in England; it is mentioned by Chaucer, but probably refers to the woodbine. Sycamore is almost pure white when freshly planed, but turns yellow when exposed to the air. It is found sometimes quite plain, but more often with a rich "fiddleback" figure; this latter is generally used for the backs of violins. Sycamore is frequently used in the natural state

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for the insides of drawers, pigeon-holes, and the like, in the smaller cabinet-work of the later Hepplewhite and Sheraton period. When used in veneer form it is usually stained a greenish grey by immersion in water impregnated with oxide of iron. When so treated it is generally known as "hare-wood" or "hair-wood."

TEAK.—The name is used for two kinds of timber. One is known as Indian; the other as African Teak. The first is *Tectona grandis* of the natural order *Verbenaceæ*. It grows in Malabar, and elsewhere in Hindustan, Ceylon, Further India, Java, &c. The second is *Oldfieldia Africana*, of the natural order *Euphorbiaceæ*. The timber of both is very similar, reddish-brown in colour, strong and durable in texture, and with a greasy appearance when freshly planed. Teak is usually polished, as it has a very disagreeable odour in the natural state. When polished without staining, it is of a deep brown colour.

THUJA or THUYA.—An African tree, the *Arbor vitæ*, closely related to the *Arbor vitæ* of America, or *Thuja Occidentalis*. The latter is an evergreen shrub in English gardens, although it reaches the size of a tree in tropical America. Thuja, when polished, is of a rich golden-brown colour, with a small aureole figure, centred with minute "bird's-eyes." The variety used for furniture is of African growth. Thuja is nearly always used in veneers. It is frequently found in small inlaid panels in Queen Anne cabinet-work.

TULIP is the wood of *Physocalymma floribunda*, the only known species of the *Lagerstromieæ*. The tree has tough oval-shaped leaves, and pannicles of purple flowers very similar in appearance to the English wistaria. The wood is yellowish-brown with longitudinal stripings of a pinkish-red. It is usually cut across the width and used for cross bandings. It is seldom employed excepting for inlaying or friezing. The tulip tree is a native of Brazil.

YEW: *Taxus*.—A genus of the natural order *Taxaceæ*, generally regarded as a sub-order of *Conifera*. The common yew, *Taxus baccata*, grows to about 30 to 40 feet, with a trunk of great thickness. It is a native of Middle and Southern Europe, and of Siberia. Many fine specimens are to be seen in English parks. It attains an age of three hundred to four hundred years. The wood was formerly much esteemed for making bows. It is very hard, tough, and elastic, the heart-wood varying from orange-red to a deep brown. It is generally used in early eighteenth century work, for "oyster pieces." Yew is also sometimes used for constructional work, but is very liable to warp and twist. The wood of the Japan Yew, *Podocarpus macrophyllus*, a tree of a genus closely allied to *Taxus* and a native of Japan, was formerly esteemed in cabinet-

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work. It has also the open yew grain, and was frequently used for "stick-back" chairs of the better class, during the eighteenth century.

WALNUT is of several kinds, but principally of two species. The first, *Juglans regia*, is a native of Ghilan, in Persia, and the North-Western Himalayas, and some parts of China; the second, *Juglans nigra*, is the American walnut. The first includes the English, Italian, and French walnut; the second, that of America, and certain varieties from Holland and Germany closely resemble it. *Juglans regia* was first introduced into England about 1565, and became the fashionable wood for furniture during the reigns of Charles II., James II., William III., and Anne. Walnut was also used during the two latter reigns in the form of oyster pieces for the veneering of the doors of the square cabinets which were so fashionable at that period.

ZEBRA-WOOD.—Of *Omphalobium Lambertii*, order *Connaraceæ*. Native of Guiana. Sometimes known as pigeon-wood. Zebra-wood is usually of a tawny brown colour with vivid stripes of very dark brown. It is generally cut into veneers, for crossbandings. Occasionally some of the smaller pieces of the later Sheraton period are veneered entirely with the wood, but the effect is generally more striking than artistic.

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